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Rainmaker Webinars

How to Set Up Simple Courses Using Rainmaker's Learning Management System

Jerod Morris and Chris Garrett

TRANSCRIPT

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Jerod Morris and Chris Garrett

Jerod: Hello there, everybody. How are you doing on this fine, fine afternoon? This is Jerod Morris. I'm here with Chris Garrett, and we are very excited today to be hosting this Rainmaker Platform webinar. We are going to be going over the Learning Management System.

You guys submitted so many great questions, so we're really excited to have this session because we know this is something that a lot of you got the platform for, a lot of you are excited to use. This will be a really good opportunity over the next 90 minutes or so to really help you get started with it. We got a lot of people here. This is great. Everybody can hear us. That is wonderful. Perfect.

Mr. Garrett, are you ready?

Chris: Let's do it.

Jerod: Okay. Welcome everybody to How to Set Up Simple Courses Using Rainmaker's Learning Management System. I'm Jerod Morris. I'm here with

Chris Garrett. As I said before, we're really excited about this session and about showing you how to use the Learning Management System.

Now, I do want to say right off the bat, as with the RainMail webinar that we did previously, there's obviously many layers of depth that we can get to. This webinar is set to go over some of the basics. So we may not get into all of the depth that you want, but we are planning future sessions.

Frankly, the questions that you guys submitted – and you submitted so many great questions – are really helping to inform future sessions that we can do as well. I just want you to know that. We will get into a decent amount of depth. We're not going to be skimming on the surface or anything, but if we can't quite get to what you want or to the specificity that you want, there will be future sessions where we will be able to cover that.

Agenda

Jerod: Just to give you an overview of today, this is what we're going to do. We're going to begin with a quick tutorial that is basically nine steps to set up a simple course. That's the main thing. If you have been thinking about using Learning Management System – and maybe you have used it, or you haven't used it yet – I want to go over these nine steps and make sure that you have all these basics in place for your courses, either free or paid. We'll start there.

Then we're going to walk through navigation, the LMS Customizer, and how to use the Dashboard function of the LMS, and then we're going to answer some of your questions.

Again, we won't be able to get to all of them, but eventually, we'll get to all of those questions because we have those questions saved. We'll be able to get to them at some point on a future session if we can't get to them today.

With that said, Mr. Garrett, any opening statements about the Learning Management System before we go through these two tutorials?

Chris: One thing that we should always say, and we do always say on these webinars, that people want to know, yes, we're going to share the slides, and yes, there is a recording, so we might have to go quite fast today. Obviously, do let us know in the question box if we skip over something or if we don't clarify something well enough, but you can play this back. We'll be sending out the recording as soon as it's edited. That usually takes a few days, but we make sure that we have a good recording. We send it out to you, and we'll share the slides as well.

Jerod: Yup. All right. Let's hop into this.

Tutorial: 9 steps to set up a simple course

Jerod: Let's get on with the first tutorial. Let's go through nine steps to set up a simple course. Let's roll.

Step 1: Create Member Groups

Jerod: The first step in setting up a course is actually not to go in and use the LMS right away. What you want to do first is you want to create Member Groups. When you have a course and when someone either gets assigned to a free course because they've done X or they've purchased your paid course, you need to be able to assign them to a Member Group so that they can access that course, but so that other people cannot. This is actually the first step that you want to go in and do is to create your Member Groups.

This graphic right here gives you a visualization for what you can do for Member Groups. You can have individual Member Groups for a free content library, for a paid member, for a paid ebook. These can overlap in whatever way that you want, and as we go through this tutorial, I'll show you how that works. But the Member Groups, this is how you determine who gets access to what. You want to make sure that you're really getting these set up before you begin and that you have an understanding of what your Member Group organization looks like, so you know who gets what with the different Member Groups.

Chris: That paid member might have access to absolutely everything, right?

Jerod: Right.

Chris: A person can be given multiple Member Groups. Think of them for the sake of this as, "I want to give people access to this, or this area, or this part." You might give people access just to the first module of your course, and that can be a different Member Group to the one that gets access to everything. Just think about what you want to give people access to and what those groups might look like.

As the diagram shows, they can overlap, so one person could have access to all three of those things. They've got the free content library, they've got the paid ebook, and they've got the paid membership, but that free content library might only give them access to that free content library.

Jerod: Yup. So let me show you how this works here with an example. The example I'm going to be running you through is actually a live example. We're creating some free courses that were based on some Showrunner podcast episodes, and these are our Showrunner mini courses. I'm going to go in and add a Member Group. Let's say I want to create a Member Group for these mini courses – and we actually have two different mini courses – but this would be the Member Group that I would create.

I would go in, and I'm going to give it a name, "Showrunner Mini Courses," and then you can have a Parent for your Member Groups. In this case, this is the Parent Member Group, but I actually have two different Member Groups underneath that so that I can give people access to just one or just the other free course based on how we're doing our fonts. You would do this right here in Member Groups, set up that way, and right here, I'm showing you how you do this with a Parent.

I already set up the main Showrunner Mini Course Member Group, but now I have these two different mini courses. One for the Interview Mini Course. One for the Unique Show Mini Course. I'll set up a separate Member Group that then go under the Showrunner Mini Course, so I could give people access to the Showrunner Mini Course Member Group. They would have access to both of these, or this allows me to say, "Eh, I just want to give them access to the Interview Mini Course." Now, since I have this separate Member Group set up, that allows me to do that. Okay?

Step 2: Add Downloads

Jerod: Step two is to add your Downloads. Again, this is before you even go in to the LMS. We recommend that you go in, and any downloads that you know you're going to have, add them before. You get all your materials ready so that when you're going in to create those lessons, you've got everything there.

Here, you go over to 'Conversion'. Click on your 'Download Manager', and then you come in here to create a new download. There are different options that you have.

Obviously, you're going to give your download a name. You're going to upload your download, which is going to give you this unique file download. You can decide if you want to track the downloads, if you want to include it in the Member Downloads shortcode. But again, what's very important is that over here in your Member Groups, if this is going to be specific to a Member Group, you need to highlight which Member Group can get that.

This particular download is for Lesson One of the Interview Mini Course, so I'm going to designate that for the Interview Mini Course or for the Interview Mini Course Member Group. Then you can also specify an amount of delay, so you could say that, "Okay. They're going to get this, but they can't get it until 7 days after signup." This allows you to specify that as well if you're dripping out your content in that fashion.

You can go through and do this for all the different downloads. Maybe they're PDFs. Maybe they're MP3s. Whatever download you're going to have, you can specify them this way and get them all up there ready to go so you can use them when you start creating your lessons.

Chris: You can add them later, but being prepared this way means that it's going to be easier to set up your lessons because you can have all of your assets available. If you want something that's going to be available just to the general public and they don't have to log in, you can give public access to that file. It will still protect it and still track their number of downloads that have been made with it.

But for this, for a course, you really want people to log in, so you need to do that Member Group and say, "Who is allowed access to this?" and it will protect it from anybody else getting access.

Jerod: Yup, and then here, step two. This is just showing you a menu of your Downloads, and this is always a good check. Sometimes, I'll go through and get real excited, and forget to add my Member Group. If you do that, you'll see a big blank space here. That's a good reminder to go in and make sure that you have your Member Group designated for your Downloads.

Step 3: Create course skeleton

Jerod: All right. Now step three. Okay, here we go. Now we start creating the course, so I'm going to show you how to create the course skeleton. Here, you want to go into the Content menu and choose 'LMS'.

Now, after you do that, you're going to see this menu. You can go through here and do this one by one. You can create a course page, then you can create your module page individually, and then create the lessons. Perfectly fine to do that, but what I'm going to show you here is how to use the Bulk Creator to create your course skeleton.

You would just choose 'Bulk Creator'. Then you're going to get this menu, so you give your course a name. In this case, it was "Showrunner Mini Courses," and then determine how many modules you want to have. I could have done this two different ways. I could have set up a separate course for each one of these mini courses, but I actually chose to do one course, "Showrunner Mini Courses," and then each "mini course" is a module.

To me, I just liked that setup better. You have that kind of flexibility with the LMS. So since I have two of these mini courses that I'm doing as modules, I'm going to choose '2'. Then when I click 'Generate Course', now it's going to bring up these two modules. So I add the names, so "How to Book, Plan, and Execute Engaging Interviews", "3-Step Process for Creating a Unique Show".

These are my two modules. Each one is going to have three lessons, so I'll add three there for the 'Add Lessons'. Then when I click 'Generate Course', now it's going to bring up all the individual lessons, and I can give them all names right here. This is great if you already have the modules and the lesson names all set up. This is so much more efficient than going and creating each one individually. All this is done right here in this one popup screen.

Chris: 'Generate Course' is at the end, right? You have to click 'Add Modules' first.

Jerod: Yes. I'm sorry. You click 'Add Modules', and then click the 'Add Lessons'. Then you click 'Generate Course' at the end.

Chris: Yeah.

Jerod: Yeah, sorry. Then you click 'Generate Course'– I didn't include the screen – but now, everything is in there. If you go to your LMS edit, you'll see all of these set up there as individual pages, so your course page is there. You can go in and edit what's on that. Your two Module Pages are there. You can go in and edit those. Same thing with the Lesson Pages. They're all created there for you, and you'll see what those pages look like here in just a sec.

Chris: Somebody just asked, "Do you have to have modules?" You do not have to have modules. You can have a course, and you can have lessons that belong to that course.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: If you don't need to organize it that way, you don't have to.

Step 4: Create course sidebar

Jerod: Yup. The next step then is you want to create a course sidebar. This helps with your navigation. To do this, go to 'Design', and then you go and click 'Dynamic Sidebars'. When you go to Dynamic Sidebars, you use that to give your sidebar a name. Again, for me, it's going to be the same sidebar for each one of these, so I'm going to name it "Showrunner Mini Courses." You can give it a description if you want to right here. Click 'Add New Sidebar'. Then once you do that, then you go back into your content areas.

Inside of the Design menu, go to Content Areas, and you will see this content area for LMS Navigation. You're going to take that, and you'll find your new Dynamic Sidebar. You look for the sidebar with the name that you just created. It was "Showrunner Mini Courses," and you can see all your other content areas over here. You're going to drag that LMS Navigation content area into Showrunner Mini Courses.

Now, this gives you a number of different features, so you choose the course that this is going to be for. Choose if you want to show the title. You can show the amount of levels that you want to show – whether you want to show the favorite, the completed. You go through here and figure out which of these features that you want to toggle on or off. Click 'Save', and this will now give you the sidebar for your course. I will show you how to actually put that on to your Lesson and your Module Pages.

Avatar

Jerod: Now, this is another thing, and Chris, you added this. I'm glad that you did. You can actually go in and add if you want people to be able to have their member information, their user avatar, a link to click on their profile. You can create a Text widget inside of that sidebar, and that will give you some of those different membership options, which is a great way to just make the navigation really simple and intuitive for folks.

Chris: Yeah. Can you just go back to that LMS? Yeah. The one thing that I do not have checked on mine is "Show only the current module" because I want to show all the modules all the time.

Jerod: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's right.

Chris: Just a little tip there because I was confused. I was looking at my course and thinking, "Why am I not seeing everything?" It's because I got that checked.

Jerod: Uh-huh, there you go. Yeah. If something isn't looking right on the sidebar, how you want to, go back in here and just change these settings. Obviously, that will help you out. Okay, so we went over this. Now, as we continue on with step four, create the course sidebar, you want to make sure that your pages obviously have the sidebar in there. Your default layout may have the sidebar chosen, but you can go in on each individual lesson, module, and course page and make sure that you choose.

You can choose for it not to have a sidebar, which is fine. Or you can choose for the sidebar to be on the left or right, and you would just highlight whichever one you want it to be on. I always like mine on the left, so that's why I chose this. Then, down in the right sidebar section of the Edit page, you'll see this area for 'Sidebar Selection'. This is where you go in and you choose that Dynamic Sidebar that you created, so it will bring up all the individual sidebars that you have, as you can see.

We've got an individual sidebar for The Showrunner course, the main course. We don't want that sidebar here. We want this Showrunner Mini Courses sidebar that we just created to be in there, so we'll create that. Just make sure that you put that on the Lesson Pages, in the Module Pages when you're in there editing them, and that will bring your sidebar up.

Step 5: Add lesson content

Jerod: The next step now is to start adding your lesson content. When you go in and when you look at all your LMS Items, if you used that Bulk Creator, you'll see all the individual lessons and modules there, so click on 'Edit'. It will already have your title set up if you chose the title. You can give it a nice little slug right here, and then add your content.

For me, for these, these courses are all audio-based courses, so I want to give a little description of each one that sells to listen. Why people are coming into this lesson, why should they listen to the actual lesson, what it's about. Give them a little bit of a description here.

When you scroll down, you will find this Multimedia area. This allows you to add your different multimedia, add some of the downloads that we added earlier. For this one, we've got our MP3, so we're embedding the MP3 right here.

You can dictate where you want the media placed, so you can do it 'Before the Content'. You can do it 'After the Content'. I want it here. You can give it an individual Title or Description. I don't use that here because I've already used my description up in the content area. The title of the lesson is enough, but you might want to do that. You can do that.

You can display it in a lightbox, so you have some different options here that you can use. You can dictate how many days need to pass before people have access to this content. Depending on the particulars of your course, this section gives you a chance to dictate those. Then, of course, this is just for … I couldn't fit the entire Multimedia area in here, but if you scrolled down a little bit further, again, you have the 'Show in how many days?' and then you can add a 'Drip Message'.

Let's say that they don't have access to that content. You can let them know, "Hey, you will have access to this content after seven days," or whatever message you want. Then, when they access, they won't get that message obviously. Then you can have download links.

For this one, for example, I've got the MP3 there for people to listen to. We also have the transcript, so we uploaded all of our transcripts. Then when you click on this 'Add Download Link' … I don't have this menu on here, but a little module window will pop up, and you can search for it. I named all of my transcripts just after the name of the lesson.

Search for the lesson. It will pop up. You choose the PDF, and then when you actually go look at the page – and I'll show you this page, so you can see what it actually looks like – a nice little styled link will be there so that people can download the transcript.

If we go to the next slide, this shows you what it looks like. That pulls that transcript up right here so that people can click 'Download'. Here is the multimedia setup from where we added our MP3, and we told it to do it after the content, not before the content, and then you can see how the sidebar is set up as well.

Chris: Can you just go back to the editing screen because there's one thing that we haven't got on here?

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: When you are doing a drip, the other thing that you might want to do is change the order of lessons, and over on the right-hand side of the screen when you're saying like which Member Group should have access there's an order number, so you can put in its order – one, two, three, four – but actually, when you're viewing all the lessons, you can actually drag and drop. You can drag Lesson Two above Lesson One, and that would make the order change as well.

Jerod: Let me show folks that. I can show everybody that actually. What Chris was just saying is right here in Order, you can do this by number. You could have Lesson One be number One, Two, Three, or if you go here into your LMS Items, you can actually click this. So here are my three lessons right here. This is Lesson One. This is Lesson Two. This is Lesson Three. If I wanted to make this Lesson Two, I can drag this up and change it right there. Now, this one will come up first in sidebar, so it makes it really simple to do.

Chris: It's something that people find by accident a lot of times instead of knowing it's there, so I wanted to point it out.

Jerod: Very, very helpful. Yeah. I'm glad you pointed it out, Chris. Thank you. Okay, so moving on now. This is what the page looks like right here. That's step five, adding your lesson content. Of course, you'd go in and do that for all of your individual lessons.

Step 6: Edit Lesson Settings

Jerod: The next step is to edit the lesson settings. Right over there where we just showed you that display or the order number, below that is the Member Group. Remember, we set up those Membership Groups earlier? Now this is where you use that.

For this lesson that I was using, this is for the interview course, so I'm going to choose 'Interview Mini Course' to make sure that only people who have that Member Group for Interview Mini Course can do this. Now, if I wanted to give access to anybody who has a free registration on Rainmaker.FM, I could do that, too. All your Membership Groups are up here. You can use them as you need to, but if you want to restrict access, you've got to make sure that you choose the Member Group that has access to it so that not everybody does.

That is step six.

Step 7: Create a Thank You Page

Jerod: Now, step seven … we've got our course set up. We've got our Member Groups. Now, we've got to be able to give people access to it, and that's what step seven begins to allow us to do. Before we go in and create a product, we want to create a Thank You page so that when people get access to this course, we send them to this Thank You page. You're going to go in and 'Add New' and add a 'Page', and very simply, just create your page.

Now, I find that when I'm doing a Thank You Page, I like to have something in the headline that is descriptive of this page because, when you go use the dropdown on the 'Add Product', it shows you the headline of the page. If you just say, "Thank you," and all of your Thank You Pages only say, "Thank you," you might have six Thank You Pages on there, and it can be a little tricky to figure out which one. So I like to say, "Success! Are you ready to start conducting better interviews?"

It reminds people what they got. Again, reinforces your value proposition. I put that there in the title, and then on the actual page content now, I want to direct people toward the course. They've done whatever they need to do to get the course. They're getting this Thank You Page. So there you go, "You have access to Lesson One immediately. To view it now, click here," and that will take them into the course.

Chris: Obviously, Jerod, right now just says, "rainmaker.fm," but you'd actually put the URL of the course in there?

Jerod: Yeah, sorry. This was just a dummy URL, but yes. It would be to the actual lesson URL or to course URL, wherever you want to take people.

Chris: Yeah.

Jerod: Then, same thing here. You can add member access to this, too, so that only people who have that specific Member Group can get to this page. You can add that right there in the same place as well.

Chris: Where that might come in is, you might want to put a download right on the Thank You Page – "Get started right way" – so you don't want anybody having access to that page. You only want the specific people. Then later, when you get really advanced, as you start tagging people and you have automation rules, it's really important. You only want those people who should have access to get into that.

Jerod: Yup

Step 8: Create Product

Jerod: Okay, and then you're going to want to go in and create a product because now you need people to be able to get access to this, and you'd do that by having a product. You're going to go to Conversion and click 'Product'. Then you go in and you set your Product Settings. I'm going to have an individual product for each one of these mini courses, so this is one of them, 'How to Book, Plan, and Execute Engaging Podcast Interviews'. I give it that headline.

Again, we're going to choose our Thank You Page, so I'd choose that Thank You Page that I just set up. I'm going to choose the Member Group that is associated with this course, so same thing right here.

When you go in here and you create it for the first time, this Member Group will be under the Parent Member Group. Once you've chosen it, it goes to the top since that's the Member Group that is appropriate for this particular product. I'm going to choose Interview Mini Course. Then "This is a free product," so I'm going to check that it's free. If it's not free, then you go in here and dictate your price. It may be $19.95. You may charge $600 for your course. Whatever it is, you will determine that right there.

Then, down further on this Product Page, if you're going to add someone to an email list, this is where you would do it. You can add whether it's to a RainMail list or whether you have another third-party email provider. Those will come up here, and you can add them to whatever email list or autoresponder you need to add them to right here on the Product Page.

Chris: Obviously, if you're going to give it a price, you need to have your payment system set up. Whether that's PayPal or a credit card, you do need to have that set up. Don't wonder why you're not getting any money if you haven't got that set up.

Jerod: Yes.

Step 9: Promote/sell your course!

Jerod: Then the next step is to promote and sell your course. When you create this product, you're going to be given a 'Purchase link'. Obviously, if it's a free course, people aren't 'purchasing' it, but this is the checkout link. This is the link where you would direct people, and when they are on this link, then that's where they can create their membership. You can do it on pages other than checkout link, too, but this is obviously the first place that you would go.

Going through those steps, that is how you set up your course. That's everything that you need to get people access to your course to get rolling.

Really, it's that simple and easy to do. Now, we'll go over some more here. How do you make the navigation look better? How do you customize the look and feel of it? There's a lot to do beyond that, but going through those nine steps will get your course, either free or paid, set up and ready to go.

Chris: Just to reiterate, that new member, that person that registered because they've checked out on that 'Purchase link,' you can add them to the list. There's a dropdown of all the lists that you've already got created when you're editing that product, so you can send them a receipt – so send them an automatic email that says, "This is how you log in. You've registered. It's homework." But also, you can add them to a list.

You really do want to put these people somewhere. If it's customers versus prospects or if it's members, you do want to be able to communicate with them later, so remember that step.

Jerod: Yeah, absolutely.

Tutorial: Navigation, the LMS Customizer, and Dashboards

Jerod: All right. Chris, you're ready to go through Navigation, the LMS Customizer, and Dashboards?

Chris: Yeah, let's do it.

Jerod: Let's do it. Okay.

Chris: Navigation's super important. We got a ton of questions about it. The thing that you've got to remember is, with Rainmaker, there's usually a dozen different ways of achieving the same things. We've got two options here, but there are other options.

The first one is the really basic easy thing that I'm doing on my site because I'm not spending enough time being fancy with it is I just have the Member Area in my Top Navigation, so I edit the menu, and I point it to the Members Page.

At the bottom here you can see what the Members Page looks like if you're not logged in. If you click on the blue link, 'Log in to the member area,' it is a popup with my login form. Then when you log in, it takes you back to the Member Area. The same place, but you logged in now. It's got code in there that's got the show and hide, so it only shows the stuff that's relevant for logged-in people. Really simple.

The point of this is the Members Page is the same whether you're logged in or not, it's just the content is different, so the link doesn't change. All I did was I linked to /members or whatever you want to call it. And because I'm showing and hiding based on whether they're logged in or not, the context changes, and it asks them to log in if they're not logged in. If they are logged in, it says, "Welcome back."

Jerod: How did you get this to come up in a popup?

Chris: Keep going, and we'll show you.

Jerod: Okay, perfect.

Chris: The next option is the Contextual Top Menu. That's where it says, 'Log in,' and then when you're logged in, it says, 'Log out.' That's code we've put into Rainmaker that looks for login, so what you have to do in your Conversion settings is you have to make sure you've got a LogIn Page set in these dropdowns. When we set up your Rainmaker site for the first time, we set up that you've got an example free content library, free member area, so a lot of this will be set up. Just make sure you've got the correct page set for your LogIn Page so this works.

When you create your item, your menu item, you go into the menus and you want it in your Primary Menu, which is the top menu usually on your website. You need to check the login that's under the Membership Pages. If you do 'View All', you can see all your pages. You want the LogIn Page connected. Then, when you save that menu out, you've created a login link, and it will automatically change from 'Log In' to 'Log Out' once you've logged in.

Let's have a look at that Member Page, so we can explain how we did that. This is the Member Page. On the left, we've got my nerdy Maker Hacks site, and you can see I'm using [hide_from accesslevel="Free"], so if they're logged in, we don't want people to see that. We don't want people logged in with free access to see this login message.

Then I've got a popup, and the popup is the default popup type. All I've done is put a login form shortcode within that popup. The popup contains just "login_formredirect=", so that redirect is where I want to take them after they've logged in.

This looks like code because it is code. We're working on making all of this easier so that you can click a button instead of having to copy and paste, and type in, but that's how I did it. My popup has a login form in it, so you don't have to leave that page until you've actually logged in. Then it redirects you back to the Member Area, but obviously, you're logged in now. It will show all that content, all the stuff that's meant for the people who are logged in.

On the right-hand side, we've got the Training page of Rainmaker.FM, and the same thing here, expect we're using the contextual links of Rainmaker.FM. We've got [show_to accesslevel='nrm-training'], so the people who have access to that see the button that takes them to that training. The people who don't have access to it will get a call to action, or they don't get to see.

All of those codes are in the Knowledge Base, so the Knowledge Base has all of this stuff in a lot more detail than we're going into here. A couple of people asked about that.

Jerod: Yeah.

LMS Customizer

Chris: The Customizer. A few people have said, "How do I change the colors in my LMS?" There's two colors you can change, the Primary Color and the Text Color, and there's a couple of options for LMS themes. Now, this is going to be expanded later, but right now, it's enough so you can change your emphasis color and your text color.

Obviously, my theme is all grays and blues, so I wanted the text color to be black, and I wanted the primary color to be this special blue. It's the Rainmaker blue actually, so I'm just stealing the branding. That allows you to change the color.

Jerod: Is LMS Customizer out of Labs yet?

Chris: I believe it's still in Labs .

Jerod: Okay. So to turn it on, you go into labs and turn it on?

Chris: Somebody can confirm for me, but I believe it is.

Jerod: I'm pretty sure. Yeah. Okay.

Course Dashboard

Chris: Okay. The next thing is how I got those nice images to come up, when you got into the Course page, those nice module buttons. That's the Course Dashboard, and it's another shortcode here. Just [lms_dashboard]. The default is a grid view, but you can have a list view where the Knowledge Base, again, goes into detail with all of that, what you want to show and hide within those.

But in the module, you can have a Featured Image, and you want that Featured Image to be 300 by 300 pixels.

Just like uploading images normally, if you go into that Featured Image box, you can set that you want to have a Featured Image. You can upload the image, and then you can edit the image to 300 by 300, save it out, then go back, and you've set your featured image. Save that module. Then, using that dashboard shortcode, you can show a nice grid of modules. I put that right in my course homepage, so it shows all the modules under the course. Obviously, if you want to then go into a module and have another dashboard, it can show the lessons within that.

Jerod: We have a question here about, "Is it possible to show different courses in one dashboard versus just modules?" Could you actually show like if you have four different courses, show those in a dashboard?

Chris: The way I would do that is if you go back to when we're showing and hiding, that slide with the Rainmaker.FM, there on the right-hand side, we do "show_to accesslevel," so that's how I would do that. If they've got access, I would show it. If they don't have access, they won't see it. But what you could do is you could hide from training, then you could show, "Hey, you really need to sign up for the training," and have a call to action.

Jerod: Yup.

Chris: You can with the Dashboard. You can set the Parent, so you could actually have the modules of the Robot Course on a different page because you can set the Parent that you want to show, but that's going further than we need to just for this. So that's how you do a dashboard.

Jerod: Okay.

Answering some of your questions

Jerod: All right, so let's start going through some questions here, Chris. Obviously, we have some that were pre-submitted, so we're going to go through some of those. Obviously, you all are submitting some great questions in the question box, too. We're going to try to get to a bunch of those as we go through here, too.

What is the best method to link/include a discussion forum as part of a course?

Jerod: The first question, Chris, is, "What is the best method to link/include a discussion forum as part of a course?" We both have an example for this, so I will let you explain yours first.

Chris: Yeah. The answer to it is repeatedly often and with a call to action. In my autoresponder, I'm going to be telling them, in this, you can see on the 'Welcome to the Robot Course!' message, I'm going to tell them to introduce their self. That's the first thing I want them to do. You'll notice very often with our communities, we'll ask you to introduce yourself. That's not just good community building.

That's also a way that you can get some insight as to who you're attracting and what their needs are because, if they say, "I have joined because … I really want to do this because … ," that's really good information for you. It helps bring the community together. It helps show that there's some energy and vibrancy to the community, but it's really good insight as well. In your course autoresponder, or your membership site autoresponder, get them to introduce their selves. You want to link to that thread, that 'introduce yourself' thread.

Now, obviously, as well in the lessons, you can just say, "Got any questions? Got opinions? Discuss it over here," and you can send them preferably to the thread that's about that topic. If not, send them to the forums so that they can see, "Oh, right. We're meant to discuss this. We're meant to talk about it." They're the basic examples, but Jerod's got a specific example as well.

Jerod: Yeah. You can also use your sidebar to do it. If you have your sidebar set up, as we showed you how to do, you can go in and like right here, I've just styled it with the button class, and then you can either link to the general forum. You can link to a specific thread. I love Chris' idea of sending people to a specific thread.

Now, Chris, correct me if I'm wrong here, but there is a content area also that will have recent forum replies. Will that work on like a general sidebar, an LMS sidebar, or is that only on forum sidebars? I'm pretty sure I saw Danny Marguiles do that on his, where he had like in his course sidebar, he had like recent forum replies, so you could see what people were talking about related to the course.

Chris: I am not entirely sure about that because I know there was an issue where we were disabling the forum when you weren't in the forums, but I think that should work. That's something we need to check out.

Jerod: Yeah, but that would be one thing to try, especially if you have a forum and all of the threads are generally related to your course. Now, if you have a lot of different threads, this may not work because it's going to be all the recent replies, but if you have one course, one forum, that could be another way that you could use your sidebar to do that.

Chris: Belinda in the questions says that she has the forum recent topics and responses in the sidebar, plus the thread for each lesson, so that's really a really good tip.

Jerod: Yeah. Maybe it was Belinda's that I saw do that.

Chris: Belinda's come back with another, "So they can jump to the forum from a few different places." I like that idea. That's really good.

Jerod: Yeah, very nice.

What is the best way to track the success and progress of your students as they move through the LMS? What improvements are coming?

Jerod: Next question, "What is the best way to track the success and progress of your students as they move through the LMS?" and "What improvements are coming?"

Chris: Let's start with the second part of the question, "What improvements are coming?" We're actually building a feature – and we're trying to make it as elegant as possible, which is why we haven't revealed anything yet – called the Grade Book. That's our internal project name for it, which means you'll be able to track everybody's progress through your courses – where they're getting stuck, where they're succeeding, how fast they're moving through it – and be able to get the information you need out of the progress. But right now, what can you do?

The first way would be to test them. The second way would be to get them onto different autoresponders. So if we progress the slide. In the quiz editing area, you can get a report. You can find out who has submitted a quiz. Now, they can't do this, only you can do it as the admin, but as you can see – I've blanked out my email address – if they were logged in when they took the quiz, it actually puts it to a name, so you can see that Chris on 31st of August at 11:14 took the quiz. This is his answers, this is his score, and this is the IP address he used, which quiz it was, and what's his username was and everything.

For actual testing your students' progress, send them to a quiz, they fill it out, and you can see their answers. They could get a result there then. You could even send them to another page that says "Success" or "Failed" and those different things with that. That's the first example.

The second … if we progress the slides to the next thing.

I have a link that we showed earlier where there's a call to action that says, "Start the Robot Course," so I want to say, if they land on this page, this Robot Course page, I want to add them to the autoresponder.

The reason I do that is because I've got people who are coming to sign up just for my blog articles. They might be just coming from Facebook. They just want to see the latest articles. They're not interested in the Robot Course.

They might be beyond that. They might be really advanced people. Then I've got other people who are interested, so I don't want to have the same autoresponder go to everybody assuming that they've joined it.

The way I've got around this is, if they go to that page, it adds them to autoresponder, and then it encourages them to engage with it. You can take that further. You can say if they get to Module Two, if they get to Module Four. Now, obviously, if somebody is clicking around and browsing around, you could jump the gun a little bit, but that's another way of seeing how far people are getting and also encouraging them through.

Jerod: Yeah. All right.

How can learners be 'tested' on their knowledge? (for proof of learning, reporting)

Jerod: Next question. "Can you provide guidance on how learners can be 'tested' on their knowledge? I will need proof of learning, so some testing and reporting would be helpful." Chris, I think you started to go over this already with the quizzes.

Chris: Yeah. We've got quizzes, and we've got forms. Now, right now with the Quiz Report, you can't export it, but that's something definitely we need to look at so that you can get those out into a spreadsheet or whatever. But with the Forms, you can. If you set up a form that asks them to do the homework, do the test, or sending in their required content, then you can download those. It downloads it like a spreadsheet, and then you can import it into Word or any other application. You could even do a mail merge with that.

Jerod: Excellent.

How to set up the course so that participants can sign up for free, are able to see all of the modules available, but only able to access module one

Jerod: Okay. "How do I set up the course so that participants can sign up for free, are able to see all of the modules available, but only able to access module 1? Participants who want to access the following modules will then be prompted to pay. (Like in the Digital Commerce Institute)." Chris, let's walk people on how to do this, and we basically explained the method earlier, which is Member Groups, right?

Chris: Yeah. With the Member Groups, you can say, "Okay. This is available to just paid people." Ie. 'academy' here. And this is available on the right-hand side to both." There's 'free' and 'paid.' That's just the protection part. If you want to have a call to action, though, that's when you're going to have to use those show and hide shortcodes that we mentioned earlier.

If you want to say, "Okay, you don't have access to this, but you can sign up over here," then you need to add those codes. That's what I was saying about, right now, the Knowledge Base, and you can copy them. But if you're not quite ready for that yet, we're trying to make it easier so that you don't have to remember those codes and the parameters for them.

Jerod: Yeah.

Is there a way to add more than one video per lesson page?

Jerod: Is there a way to add more than one video per lesson page?

Chris: Yes. There's only one video box right now, but if we look at the next slide, we've got an example of embedding multiple YouTube videos. In the text area of the lesson, you can just drop in any YouTube links, Vimeo links, or whatever makes sense, and they'll just stack up just like you were doing a blog post.

Jerod: You can only have one video say come up in the lightbox or like one video that you've … ?

Chris: Yeah.

You've got the primary video space for that page, but if you need more than that, that's an HTML area, the box there where you type into.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: Whatever you could do in a blogpost or a regular page, you can do in there.

Jerod: Yeah. Okay.

Is it possible to send content as a nice document rather than unattractive, hard-to-read, plain-style text?

Jerod: Here we go. "I use forms to create wellness coaching questionnaires. I send the content entered by the participants then as an email when they click 'Complete,' but it arrives in their inbox in an unattractive, hard-to-read, plain-style text. Is it possible to send it as a nice document?"

Chris: Yeah. You can do formatted HTML, right, so you have to make sure that when you do that notification, you set the format to HTML, and then in the actual body of that in the message, you can use bold, and you can use all the HTML. You can go mad with it. That might not be as rich as you would like. That comes down to the ability and the compatibility of your HTML.

So you could go quite fancy with that. You can do quite a big thing with it. Beyond that, you would have to probably send them a PDF document, and that's getting outside the realms of the LMS and into using Adobe Suite. It really depends what you need to send them and how good it is to look, but you can get quite fancy with those HTML emails.

Jerod: Yeah.

Best practices for keeping the engagement and excitement of students in you courses and programs?

Jerod: "What are your best practices to keep the engagement and excitement of students in my courses and programs?" This is a great question that can probably be an entire session.

Chris: Yes.

Jerod: What do you think, Chris?

Chris: I think what we've talked about earlier, of getting people to engage in your forum, engage with you, and keep encouraging them and giving them little pieces of encouragements. Maybe use the marketing automation to send emails to say, "Well done. You've got to Module 3. Keep going." That works really well. Community and reminding them of what they signed up for and why they signed up for it is really important, but I found accountability works even better. If you're doing webinars, teleseminars, or doing videos, give them homework to do.

Don't call it homework necessarily, but say, "Okay. I want you to tell me what you're going to do and when you're going to do it by," so they have to come back and say, "By next Thursday, I will have created my ebook, and it will be on my site's download" – and then hold them to that.

Ask them, "What challenges did they face in doing that homework? You said you were going to have it done by Thursday. How are you doing?" and, "Are you going to have it done by Thursday, or have you seen some problems?" That means that they don't just passively consume videos, but they're actually engaged in it mentally and actually doing something.

Jerod: Yeah, and I think in so many ways, it comes back to communication. You can turn comments on, on individual lessons so that if people have questions or have a comment about that lesson, they can post it. Of course, then, you want to go in there and reply to it – and maybe even get a little conversation going that way, in addition to the forum.

Then using email. With a lot of courses, especially if you're going to drip out the courses, then let's say that you have a course that has four different lessons, and you're dripping a new one out every week. Those people are going to be on an autoresponder, and as that course opens up, you don't want it to just open up silently. You can send an email that's going to go to those people and say, "Hey, you've already completed Lesson One," or, "You've done Lesson One. Now you have access to Lesson Two. Here's what you're going to get." You can use that email to give people little high-fives, get them excited, and keep the engagement up.

In all those little places where you can communicate, that's really important. And you can use marketing automation. This is another way. We do this on The Assembly Call, and I've explained this before. If someone hits our halftime show twice and they're logged in, we're sending them an email thanking them for supporting us. Same thing on our post-game show, and you can do that inside of a course as well.

Just someone visiting say the third lesson page, you could just send them a quick email that's just, "Hey, congratulations on making it this far, and I really hope that you learned a lot in Lesson Two. The rest of these lessons are going to teach you X. This is great. If you have any questions, just reply to this email and let me know." Those kind of little things really help keep the engagement and excitement going as well.

Chris: We're working on another trigger, which is, if they view a video to a certain percentage, we can have that trigger, the automation as well. So you can say, "If they get 60 percent through video one, send a message." That'd be really cool when we've got that.

Jerod: Yeah, absolutely.

How to put together monthly webinars to form case studies

Jerod: Okay. "For my free members, I have monthly webinars and would like to set them up in my LMS like Digital Commerce Institute does with its Case Studies. Is it possible to get some guidance on how to put that together?" Actually, I'm going to put slides back here for a second, and I just want to show you real quick. I'll show how I set this up for these mini courses. This is a review of what Chris talked about earlier using the LMS Dashboard code.

You can see right here. This is the Mini Course: How to Book, Plan, and Execute Engaging Podcast Interviews. The lessons are right here, and each of the individual lessons. 'Lessons' – it could be a webinar, your webinar videos. It could be whatever, but you can organize them in this really simple stylized way. If you go look at this page, it just has very simply the LMS Dashboard. I didn't add anything to this, just the LMS Dashboard shortcode, and that automatically populates all of those lessons. The same thing happens

if we go to the main course page, we've got the individual modules showing here. Again, it's the same shortcode that I'm using, which is just "[lms_dashboard]." Let me go into an individual lesson page. The Digital

Commerce Academy ones look really nice because they've got that Featured Image, and they look really good. As long as you're going in here, and this is a Lesson Page, and using this Featured Image section and adding your feature image there, then they're going to look really nice when you use that LMS Dashboard. Whether it's a lesson, whether it's a webinar replay, that's the best and simplest way to do it – just using the built-in Rainmaker functions. Anything to add to that, Chris?

Chris: No, I think that's it. Just make sure they're 300 pixels by 300 pixels, and then they'll not distort.

Jerod: Yup.

Can you send out announcements through the LMS?

Jerod: Okay. The next question, "Can we send out announcements through the LMS? Say for announcing a webinar?"

Chris: No, because the LMS is just the member course part. Going back to when we set that product up, what you want to do is add them to a list. Add them to an autoresponder. Preferably, from my point of view, add them to a list and get that autoresponder attached to the list, and then your announcements go to that broadcast list.

Jerod: Yup.

Chris: Even if they've been on your course for like six months, you can still email them then the announcements, and you can say, "Okay. We've got a webinar coming up. This is how you register, and this is what you need to do to prepare."

Jerod: Yeah, so it's not sending an announcement through the LMS, but it's sending an announcement via the email that's attached to the course, that's attached to the LMS. Especially if you're using RainMail, it almost feels like you're doing it through the LMS because you're doing everything in there via the Dashboard. But as long as you're getting people on to a list, whether it's an autoresponder or a regular list, then you can reach out and email that list to announce your webinar or whatever other event you have going on. That's why that's so important.

Chris: Yes. Belinda is saying she uses the podcast embed to embed podcasts, embed a video, so that's a good idea. There's a couple of people asking about design. Right now, I think the best thing is, if there's a design-style question, do contact Support, and they're really happy to point you in the right direction. You don't necessarily need your own designer. A couple of people asked about your images for the example you just showed. Are you using the same image each time?

Jerod: Yeah, so let me go back in here and show folks. It is not the same image. These are different images. I kind of cheated on this one. Each one of these mini course lessons was based on a podcast episode, so we already create these images for the podcast episodes. I just used the Featured Images that we already had created for each lesson and just went in and used that as the Featured Image.

Chris: Ah, I see. These are the multimedia sharing images that we create?

Jerod: Yeah, so it's the same basic, obviously, image and layout. Then we just changed the words on each one. But look, for a course, if you want to make it look nice, having that similar visual style and then just changing the name of the lesson, it does make this look nice – or you could do a totally different image.

Probably, for instance, let me show folks this one – eventually, once this is done, these are placeholder images. This is our main Showrunner image. Eventually, we'll have a different image for each one of these courses. The courses themselves are different, and we want to represent that difference visually.

But once you're inside the actual course and you have some individual lessons, if they're related, then maybe you use a similar image style like this, or depending what you want your visual style to be, you may do different ones.

That's how we did it for this one, and it's just going to depend on what your style is going to be for that course, what you want to do.

Chris: Yeah.

How to convert PowerPoint slides into the LMS

Jerod: Moving on to the next question: "How do I convert PowerPoint slides into the LMS?" Mr. Garrett, do you have a best practice for this?

Chris: Yeah. What I would always recommend you do is export your PowerPoint as a PDF document that most people can open regardless of the software they've got in their machine. Usually, PDF can be opened by most people. Most people don't have PowerPoint. Even though PowerPoint does have like an executable, that's only really good for Windows users. Even on Mac, you can get some bad formatting, and I don't think it works on Linux. The best way would be to export the slides as a PDF and have that as a download, but even better would be for you to create a video of you talking over those slides. Then you've got video and audio.

Jerod: Video and audio, and then you can get a transcript as well.

Chris: Exactly. Yeah.

Jerod: There you go, and I think we have a question coming up about that, so let me not spoil that answer. I'll come back to that in a second.

What is the best screen capture software?

Jerod: What is best screen capture software? I use Camtasia, that's screen capture software. I've also used just the normal QuickTime that was built into my Mac, but I like Camtasia better. What do you use?

Chris: Yeah. I like ScreenFlow. For audio and video editing, the team, the multimedia team, Kelton, Clare, and co., they use Adobe products, so Adobe Audition and Premiere. Was it Premiere? Premiere?

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: For the actual capture, yup, Camtasia, ScreenFlow. There's a few others out there, but they're not as fully featured. And like you said, QuickTime does it as well.

Jerod: Yup.

What is the best way to drop content via email, and for people to binge on all content immediately?

Jerod: Okay. "I'm creating an audio-only free course as a lead magnet for my podcast, as featured on some recent episodes of The Showrunner." That's actually what I'm showing you right now in these examples. "What are the best practices on Rainmaker for using the LMS for an audio-only course, and what's the best way to drip content via email to people over a period of time? Is there also a way for people to get all the content immediately if they want to binge on it?

Again, I can work on using those best practices for these individual lessons. As you can see here, I'll go in and show you on the Edit page what we have done here. Again, we are taking the MP3 that we uploaded and just putting it here in the Embed URL. That way, we have the nice-looking player that you see here. We also have the transcript download.

Now, one thing that we will also add to this that isn't on here yet is we will add a download for the MP3. Someone may not want to listen right here on the page. They may want to download the MP3. I would say a best practice is to allow them to do that.

Frankly, if you really want to go best practices, and we haven't decided if we're going to do this yet for this Showrunner mini courses, but actually upload it in video form, especially if you can have some kind of visual attached to it.

If there were slides that went with it, even if it was just audio, you could upload it as a video, and not only could you have that on YouTube to get the YouTube search and all of that, although if it's a course that you don't want people to have access to, you'd want to make sure that video is private or unlisted. But again, having as many different ways that people can consume the content is a good way to do it, and you have all of those options when you create Lesson Pages with the LMS.

Now, when it comes to what you want to show people, what we're doing with this one, quite simply, it's a very short course. These lessons are pretty short, so we're either going to go one lesson per week, or I'm even thinking go one lesson per day. Lesson One, they would have access to immediately, so nothing here. It would just be "Show in how many days?" is just zero because they're getting it right away. For the second lesson, I would just put a "1" here, and I would have a little drip message, "You will have access to this lesson in one day from registering for this course." So give people a little message.

Then, what you want to make sure that you do then is, when people sign up for the course, again, get them to an autoresponder, and then one day later, when this lesson is available to them – and actually, you can set the Drip Delay over here, too, so that the entire lesson doesn't even pop up. This is for the multimedia, so they could see the rest of the lesson, but not the multimedia. This would actually not even allow them to see the lesson, so whichever way you want to do it.

Then, just make sure that you have that autoresponder set up so that one day later, one day from when they register for the course and get placed on the autoresponder, when the lesson comes, you have an email that says, "Hey, lesson number two is ready for you. You're going to learn this, that, or the other." Link to the lesson. That's how we're setting it up for this one. I think those are some general best practices that are smart to follow.

Chris: Yeah.

Jerod: Anything else to add on that one, Chris?

Chris: No. You're the king of audio courses. I can't help you.

Jerod: Oh, the binge part of it: Is there a way to get people to content immediately if they want to binge on it?" Sure. Once again, if you just go in and if all of your lessons have nothing in here and have nothing in here, they're going to get everything right off the bat – if it's all the same Member Group.

Chris: Yeah. If they do have a drip delay, what you'll do is, kind of sneakily, you duplicate, and you send the binge people, that Member Group to a different page. It could be one lesson with all the downloads that's only accessible to binge members. I would recommend you make binge members pay more and promise to not refund. Very often, binge people, there's honest ones, and there's not so honest ones – and you want the honest ones.

Jerod: Yes, yes.

What is the best format for course content?

Jerod: Okay, so the next question is, "My course is designed to teach people how to utilize their practice management software to go fully paperless with their medical records. Most veterinary hospitals are still retaining some form of paper records despite the capabilities of the software they already own. What are your suggestions for the best format of the course concept? Are slides okay? I have the ability to do quality video, but it is time-consuming. Audio files? Still photos? Is there any statistical data on course popularity vs. format?"

This is the question I was referring to earlier, Chris. What are your best suggestions in terms of format?

Chris: The best is to provide it in all the ways that people learn so that they can choose the way that works best for them. The problem with statistics is the statistics look at humanity, not the people you attracted to your course. The ways you attract people to your course can influence the kind of learners you'll get. If you'll do a launch that's webinar-based, you can guarantee that you're going to skew in favor of those learning modalities.

Jerod: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: My preference would be, if you can do video, produce audio from that, produce a transcript from that, give them the slides, and then give them something practical to do, then you're going to get all the learning modalities.

Jerod: Yup. I agree wholeheartedly, Chris. I think putting the content out there at as many different ways as you can is good. If we're talking about the best format, I would always try and start from video or audio because you can then take that and do different things with it. If you have a video, you can pull out the audio and allow them to download that. You can make a transcript with it. It just allows you to repurpose it and multiply your efforts. I think that's a great place to start from, and then it's just really understanding your audience.

As Chris said, if people come from a webinar, then they may be the kind of people that really do well with web video, so you want to understand that. Really understanding how your people learn, and then combining that with a commitment to putting it out there as many different ways as possible. I think if you do that, then you'll be in the best possible shape.

Chris: Yeah, and the most important thing is to be really in touch with the people who go through your program and really get a sense of where they get stuck, where they get frustrated, what wasn't clear. That's why we like to do these as live webinars. We've got the question box, and people tell us if we're doing a bad job. They're not shy about it, and so it helps us improve, explain things, and actually go back a few steps if we didn't cover something correctly.

Jerod: Yeah. Chris, Tawanna had a follow-up. She says that she is a binge learner, loves the idea of being able to access everything at once, so to clarify, "Does she leave the show and how many days blank for people who paid upfront? Do I put them in a separate Member Group?"

There's a couple different ways you could do it. The way that Chris suggested would be to basically create a duplicate hidden page. Let's say that you have video, you could put all the videos on that one page, so people just access that one page. Otherwise, I guess, Chris, if you wanted to keep them in separate lessons, you would just have to create duplicate lesson pages that don't have the drip delay and just have a separate member group. Correct?

Chris: Yeah. My preference is that the drip isn't just to protect your content. It's also to protect them from overwhelm.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: A lot of people who race ahead, they skim over important fundamental things, and then they get stuck later. I'm saying this from experience because I've done it myself. I'm learning 3D CAD, and I thought, "Yeah, yeah. I know all this," and then I had to go back to Lesson Two because I missed something fundamental because I raced ahead. You're protecting people from the sales as well.

It's not just the people who are going to download everything and refund. You also need to think about what's the best experience for that learner. If they do want to race ahead, then you do want to put it in context of, "Do you really want to do this? Okay, here's this place," and the place to get it doesn't have to be as finely crafted and high-production value as the main experience because they know that they're stepping out of the program to do it.

Jerod: Yup.

Will third-party products be integrated soon?

Jerod: Next question. "Will you be integrating [3rd party product] soon?"

Chris: Yes. The thing is a lot of people got a favorite third-party product. We obviously have limited development opportunities to integrate all the things. The one we're looking at which would answer many people's questions about integrations is one called Zapier. Again, I've got an English accent, so is it

Zapier, Zapier? I don't know, but that's the big one that we're looking. It will allow you to integrate many things, and the underlying infrastructure of that is webhooks.

If you've got a tool that allows you to integrate with other things, it may be able to do it through Zapier or using the underlying framework. The reason why we're answering this in that way is because there's a lot of things that would be really useful to one or two people, but not the majority of us. So they're not going to be built in, but integrating through that might be able a way of making everybody happy.

One of the things that we can't do is integrate with everything out there and also develop the membership in Learning Management System, and all of the other features we're doing at the same time. It's impossible, so hopefully, that's an acceptable answer to the people who asked.

Can you set up a podcast that's protected and available only to members?

Jerod: Tanel asks, "Is it possible to set up a podcast that's protected and available only to members? Naturally, it won't be submitted to iTunes or Stitcher. Can the users then listen to it only on a web browser?" Chris, correct me if I'm wrong here, but you could set up your Podcast Feed. Again, you'd want to create a Member Group, and then same thing. On individual Podcast Episode Pages then, you could dictate that those are only available to a certain Member Group.

Chris: We did do an experiment – and I'm not going to promise anybody where it's going to go – but we did do an experiment with protected feeds that we should return to. I'm not saying it's available. I'm not saying ask Support for it because it's not available. But we did look into the possibility of protected feeds.

The thing we kept on coming up against, though, is that the experience of something that's protected is very different to your normal podcast experience. I still prefer as a user, as a consumer of this to go in, download it to my iPhone, and then listen to it later rather than have that. It's not a podcast to me. It's audio. To me, the two are different things. I think podcasts are free and on iTunes, and audio courses are something I've downloaded to my own iPhone, if that makes sense.

Jerod: Yeah, but if you had that feed, but you didn't publicize it anywhere, I guess you could give people instructions to … like I have a podcast app on my phone where I can just put a feed in, and it will get the feed. It's not publicly accessible. You have to actually have the feed URL. You're just asking the users to take those extra steps.

Chris: But the LMS doesn't have a feed, so it would have to be a podcast.

Jerod: Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Chris: It's a podcast you haven't promoted basically.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: Glen tells me that Zapier rhymes with happier.

Jerod: Hey. Well, there we go.

How to set things up so that multiple learners can log in at the same time from the same corporate customer

Jerod: "How could I set things up so that multiple learners can log in at the same time from the same corporate customer?" Any ideas here, Chris?

Chris: What people usually do is instead of having first name, surname, they set up corporate customers. They log in, and all of those people will share that login. That's great if the team's trustworthy and people don't leave and stuff. That's how most people handle it. We are looking at ways of using the marketing automation to grant people access to things, and I think that's something we'll look at down the line.

Right now, give them the same log in or get that corporate customer to give you their names and set them up accounts yourself manually. You can add a new member and give them the access from there.

Jerod: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay, we run through all the questions that we got submitted ahead of time, so we've got a little bit of time here. There are obviously some great questions here in the question box. Chris, we can run through a few of these.

How do you give away three lessons as a lead magnet and then charge for the rest of the program?

Jerod: Jay asks, "How you give away, for example, three lessons as a lead magnet and then charge for the rest of the program?"

This is a great question. We actually do exactly this at Digital Commerce Academy.

If you go in, if you get the free membership, which I think if you go to DigitalCommerce.com/Register, that free membership will give you the first four lessons of Brian's course and the first three lessons of Chris and Tony's course. Basically, the way that you do that, again, is with Member Groups. Those people have a free or those lessons have a free Membership Group.

As long as someone registers and gets the free membership, they get immediate access to those lessons. But we have the member access restricted on the other ones, so they have to be a paid Academy member. Chris was showing you those Membership Groups, "free," and then "academy" and "free." Then if they don't have the academy, then they're not going to get those other ones, so you simply do that with your Member Groups.

Chris: Yeah.

Is there a way to create continuity between an old URL to a newer URL while still letting users be aware of where they are?

Jerod: All right. Then, Donald asks, "Chris, I have some older content with video, which users identify with that URL. Is there a way to create continuity with that URL to my existing URL so that there's not confusion on where they are?" I'm not sure.

Chris: Is the URL listed in the video itself?

Jerod: Yeah. We may need a little more.

Chris: We have had customers who have used the LMS to direct people to external resources, so what they'll do is they'll send somebody on Lesson Three, they'll send people to YouTube, or they'll send people to their existing website and say, "I talked about this over here." They'll send people away like that, so that's a way of using their old video while having a new course. Yeah. If you can come back, Donald, and give us a bit more information, we can help you more then.

What are good programs for pulling audio from video?

Jerod: Tawanna asks, "What programs do you suggest for easily pulling audio from video? The one that I use … let me drag this over here. Let me see if I can open this and drag it over. It's this little QuickTime tool. I think I could show it, this little QuickTime tool. I believe I got it bundled with Call Recorder, but it's basically just 'Convert to AIFF' if you see it here, and you can drag a video file, an MP4 file into this. I'm not sure if that's standard on Macs or if I got it as part of Call Recorder, with the bundle in Call Recorder.

Chris: I think you got it with Call Recorder because it also has convert to MP3, but iTunes can convert to MP3 and different formats as well.

Jerod: Can you do it right in iTunes? Okay.

Chris: Yeah.

Jerod: You convert video? You can strip the audio from video?

Chris: I'm not sure about that. I think QuickTime might be able to do it. It's something we'd have to experiment with because we're so used to using Adobe, ScreenFlow, and stuff. I forget.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah, there are many tools out there.

Jerod: Yeah.

How to embed different formats (animation, interactive, etc.)

Chris: While you're on this screen, Jerod, Don asks about embedding different formats.

Jerod: This screen right here?

Chris: Yeah. If you scroll to the embed, there's "Display this media in a lightbox" and "Use an iframe when displaying media," so that allows you to use that

Multimedia box, but to display media other than audio, video, and that kind of thing … like if you've got an animation or an interactive. As long as it's available on the web, you can use it here because you can display it in a lightbox, which is one of those popup windows – it's not a popup, but it displays overlay – and iframe basically means embed this other webpage into this webpage. Using them together, you could actually make it pop up and load this interactive thing, interactive movie, or animation from somewhere else.

Jerod: But right now you can do one per lesson using this Multimedia content area, and the rest you would do up here. So you could put as many iframes as you want up here?

Chris: Yeah. What we've done as well in the past is you can actually have a lesson be a Child of a lesson. You can set the Parent to another lesson, so lesson four could have three different sub-items underneath it, and that would allow you to say, "Okay. Go here. Go here. Go here if you want to see this, see the animations." You don't have to have it all on that one page if you don't want to.

Jerod: Got you.

Chris: You could use the Dashboard to show those embedded in the Parent as little icons, right?

Jerod: Yep.

Yeah. It is Ecamm Call Recorder. If you're going to record any interviews on Skype with a Mac, I absolutely recommend it. It's like $25. It works great.

Chris: Thank you, Jason. Yes, that's right.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah, I use that – scared Robert because Robert is afraid of being recorded, but it's a fantastic piece of software.

Jerod: Yeah. Tawanna said she has that. Actually, Tawanna, if you just go into your account, I believe this is all included. You just have to download it separately, so you may be able to get it really simply.

Chris: Yeah. I think it comes with the bundle, and then it will be set on your machine somewhere in a non-obvious place. All those tools get added to like a folder in your applications, I believe.

Jerod: Yeah. Allegra informs us, yeah, you can do it with Auphonic. It can separate video and audio as well. ScreenFlow, you can strip out audio. All those will help.

How to upload a large number of files

Chris: A couple of people asked about uploading many, many files, and you can upload with FTP. If you contact Support, they'll enable FTP access to your uploads area. If you've used file transfer programs before, you can have access to upload really big files or many small files, and that can speed things up a little for you.

Is it possible to have a different theme for the homepage and for the LMS?

Jerod: Chris, Tanel asks, "Is it somehow possible to have a different theme for the homepage and for the LMS? I like a theme for the homepage, but it doesn't look that good when in the LMS environment."

Chris: That is something I've never looked at. I think that would be a question for Support, and it might need the expertise of a Daisy or a Jen to answer that one.

Jerod: Yeah. You can use the Customizer to change, obviously, elements of your LMS, to change them from your normal theme.

Chris: Or you can use custom styles, but you get into needing a designer. Your homepage could use the Landing Page feature of the forthcoming improved Landing Pages. That'd be another way of doing it.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: I think that's a question that Support is probably better at answering than me.

Jerod: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Michelle tells us that for free, Windows 10 has a recorder built-in to the Xbox app.

How do you get the header into the page?

Jerod: Here. Jay asks, "How do you get the header into the page?" Okay, so I think he's talking about this. Rafal did this, the header for The Showrunner Podcasting Course.

Chris: Yeah, and that's a style.

Jerod: Yeah. That's a style thing, so that's how we did that.

Any updates on the ability to charge members on a specific date every month automatically?

Jerod: Chris, do you have any updates on the ability to charge members on a specific date every month automatically?

Chris: Right now, the recurring fees are X number of days after they signed up, so like 31 days recurring would be 31 days after they signed up. We don't currently have a way to move that to a certain day. Part of the challenge is the logic of, if you are saying that it has to be the first Thursday of the month and somebody signed up on the first Wednesday of the month, that means they're going to get charged again in a day – or they're going to get an extra day that other people don't get. Right now, it has to be X number of days after they signed up. The recurring fees are taken out then.

Where to find the summary of the nine steps outlined for how to set up a simple course

Jerod: Conrad asks, "I missed the first few minutes. Where can I find the summary of the nine steps you outlined?" We would make the slides available for download and also the video be able available as well – so those will all be there. The great thing is, I based those steps off of what's in the Knowledge Base. There are some great step-by-step tutorials in the Knowledge Base. When you go into the Knowledge Base, that is where they suggest that you set up your Member Groups and set up your Downloads first.

It was a good review for me because, a lot of times, I haven't done that first, and then you end up having to do it later and scrambling to get it done. I was very appreciative of that tip from the Knowledge Base. That's a great place to go too if you want a review and get to see those step-by-step instructions.

Revisited: Is there a way to create continuity between an old URL to a newer URL while still letting users be aware of where they are?

Jerod: Donald says, "The list I referred to comes from a newsletter list from a different URL that I still have. They wouldn't recognize or connect with my current URL on Rainmaker." He's talking about those videos from above.

Chris: I had a similar situation that I rebranded, and then I created a course on a completely different domain. So some people were really lost. What I did, I made sure that they were familiar with me. On the page I sent them to, it had my smiling face, and I said, "The new home of …" I referred back to where they might have been familiar. And they were familiar with me, so they're comfortable with me sending them to the new place.

What theme is showing now on the screen for the LMS?

Jerod: Then, Nick asked, "What theme are you showing now on the screen for the LMS?" For the sidebar, it's the basic sidebar. I don't know if this is a custom theme that Rafal has on Rainmaker.FM or if that's one of the basic ones.

Chris: Apart from the header, this is the foundation of what you have in your Rainmaker site, so the Rainmaker theme that's in Rainmaker, this is where it came from. This is what he created it for. So the LMS Navigation widget is the basics of what that is on the left-hand side, and the Customizer can make it exactly those colors. It's just that custom header at the top that is a style sheet thing. It's a custom style that Jerod added.

Jerod: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris: And Tawanna says, "Dang, I need Rafal." Yes, we all do. He is very much in demand.

Jerod: Yes. If you're part of Digital Commerce Academy, Rafal's going to be doing a Q&A. When is that? I think it's in a couple of weeks, so bring your design questions to that one.

Can the course only be shown once per member?

Jerod: Let's see – John. "My dashboard uses the LMS Dashboard shortcode, but if someone has multiple Member Group access to a course, the course is displayed twice. Can I only show once per member?"

Chris: You would use the show and hide, yeah, for that, I believe, if I understand correctly.

Jerod: I believe so. Again, we are going to be doing additional webinars like this. Your response has been great. We enjoy doing them, so we're going to continue doing these on an increasing basis, especially once we get back from Digital Commerce Summit coming up next week. We'll give you all the education that you need to make the best use of Rainmaker, so keep your excellent questions coming in.

When you do video with ScreenFlow, do you suggest exporting it to Vimeo or requesting support to upload the file as is?

Jerod: Tawanna says, "When you do video with ScreenFlow, do you suggest exporting it to Vimeo or requesting support to upload the file as is?

Chris: You can upload the file as is. Usually, Vimeo video, the reason we use Vimeo is because of the team workflow that we've got, a whole multimedia team of people that work together. Then we've got people like Jerod and I who have to create content. It's good for our workflow to have those central places, but you don't have to use Vimeo.

If a file is under 100 megabytes, which it should be for people to view your video on different devices, it can just go into your regular Rainmaker area. That's when you go to Support and request FTP access if you've got a lot of those or if they're quite big files and it's taking a long time. You don't have to use Vimeo. We like Vimeo because they make it really accessible to people in mobile devices, on desktop, on iPads. Also because we've got a team that all have to work together. It makes it easier for that, but you don't have to use Vimeo.

Are there problems if people have popups blocked?

Jerod: Donald asked earlier when you were talking about the popups, "Are there problems if people have popups blocked?" Chris, when you use that popup shortcode, that's not impacted if people have popups blocked, is it?

Chris: No, it shouldn't be. No, because it's not an actual popup. It's just revealing a layer of HTML that wasn't revealed before. It's just like when you mouse-over things and the color changes. It's one of those kinds of things versus it being an actual popup.

Can you set up a page to view all the courses you have access to?

Jerod: Yeah. I know that there were several questions about setting up a page where you can view all the courses that you have access to, so I'll just show you here. This is the page that Chris referred to earlier.

This is the Rainmaker.FM Training Page. I'm viewing this as an admin right now, so I have access to both of these courses – to our new Rainmaker Training Course and to The Showrunner Podcasting Course.

If I didn't have access to The Showrunner Podcasting Course, it would show this, but it would say, "Yada, yada. Check out The Showrunner Podcasting Course to see if this is for you."

The way that you do that, again, is with show/hide, so I can come in here in the backend and show you. Again, just as Chris showed you before, this is "[show_to access level= nrm-training]," so that shows it to people who have it. If they don't have access, then they will see this, so this is being hidden from everybody with New Rainmaker Training access. But everybody else who doesn't have that is seeing this. It basically is the call to action then to sign up and get it, and the same thing down here with The Showrunner.

That is the basic way that you would do it is just set up a page, and then you can use the show/hide to then base what people can see and then what calls to action they see based on what they may not have. That's the best way to do that. Yeah. A few more questions just came in. Let me get to these.

Is there marketing automation to add or remove access?

Chris: John asked about marketing automation to be able to add or remove access. Right now, if they're logged in, you can comp access to a product, which gives them the Member Group access. What you cannot do is give or take Member Groups directly, but what you can do is comp them access to a product.

Jerod: Yeah.

Chris: If you wanted to have a course that they have to pass a test to progress, that would be one way of doing it. You give them Module One, but they have to get the Module Two product in some way or form if they want to progress. That means passing a test, talking to you, or maybe just pressing the button.

What Member Groups means

Jerod: Yeah. Bob says he's still a little bit confused by Member Groups and what this means, so let's run through this real quick. If I were to click right here – no membership required. Anybody could see this page. Anybody. There's no membership required. It doesn't matter what Member Group people have. This page is free to everyone, and this is the default.

If you choose 'has member access to,' they have to have specific member access, so they would have to have the Interview Mini Course access to be able to see this page. If you choose 'does not have member access to,' then it would just be the opposite of that. To see this, they would have to not have access to Interview Mini Course, so people who do have access to Interview Mini Course, they wouldn't be able to see this.

If you give member access to a certain group of people, but then you have this new content that you want to restrict from them – maybe it's a sales page for that specific thing, and you don't want people who have already bought it to see that page – then you could restrict member access from those people. For the most part, I use the 'has member access to,' but there have been a few cases where I've used the 'does not have member access to' in specific situations. But this is the one that you're going to use most often, which is the affirmative. You set up a Member Group. They have access to it. They are getting this content.

Chris: Yeah.

Jerod: Okay, so hopefully that answered that question, Bob, but let me know if not.

Can you place the forum in the Member Restricted Area to appear in the menu after Login?

Jerod: Let's see. "How can I place the forum in the Member Restricted Area to appear in the menu after Login?" That, you would use show/hide for that.

Chris: Yeah, but you can't use show/hide in the menu. Do you mean, Nick, that you want it in the navigation? I will have to think about that one and get back to you.

Jerod: I'm trying to think because the way that I do it here on The Assembly Call is you have to be a member to log in to the forum, but I have a link right here. The link doesn't go away whether people are logged in or not, but honestly, whether they can get to the forum or not does.

Chris: Nick says we're doing it on Digital Commerce, so there must be a way. Yeah. Contact Support. Oh it's called Community on Digital Commerce. If you contact Support. We'll find out how Rafal did it, and we'll get back to you.

Jerod: Yeah. Excellent. We're running out on time again. We're going to post the replay. We will send that out to everybody. Again, we are planning many more sessions like this and continue answering all of your questions, so keep the questions coming. Certainly go to the Knowledge Base.

Chris: I've got an answer for Nick. I've just logged in and looked.

The Community page is just a link to the URL /forums, and the reason it pops up in the protected areas is because, like we showed you the sidebar, that is a special sidebar in the LMS. In the LMS Item, the sidebar has been selected, and that sidebar has the community link in it. That's how it was done on Digital Commerce.

Jerod: Perfect. It makes sense. Excellent. All right, everybody. Have a wonderful, wonderful rest of your day. Again, use the Knowledge Base, use Support, and we'll be back soon.

Chris: Thanks, everybody, for sticking with us. That was a long one. Glad everybody stuck through it.

Jerod: It went fast, though. That was a fast 90 minutes.

Chris: I feel like it did.

Jerod: All right, everybody. We will talk to you soon on the next Rainmaker Platform webinar.