

# Open Virtual Usability Lab



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## A Remote Usability Testing Tool

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### What is OpenVULab?

OpenVULab is an open source tool designed for remote usability research. A unique feature of OpenVULab is that it can record video and audio of remote users' interactions with their computer without the need to install an application on the users' computer.

When users log into OpenVULab they are presented with a series of pre-session questions set up by the researcher. After answering these questions, users are directed to the web site or application being studied and recording begins. Users then navigate the site according to protocols established by the researcher and they may be asked to talk aloud about why they are making particular choices. At the end of the session the recording is stopped and they are prompted to answer post-experience questions set up by the researcher. Users' pre- and post-session questions and videos are stored in a relational database on the OpenVULab server that can be queried by the researcher and analyzed.

### How to use OpenVULab?

Watch a [Youtube video](#) on how to use OpenVULab. Some screens look different in the video than those currently implemented but the use of the tool is exactly the same.

### How is OpenVULab structured?

OpenVULab has two components, a Web component and RASCAL, as follows:

#### 1. What is the WEB component?

The **WEB** component is the system that is at the frontline of OpenVULab as it controls all interaction with the end user, be that an admin/researcher/or tester. The Web Component is the website companion to RASCAL.

#### 2. What is RASCAL?

RASCAL or **R**emote **A**ctivity **S**creen **C**apture **A**nd **L**ogger is a remote screen recording tool designed to capture the mouse, keyboard, screen, and audio of a user. It is used in conjunction with the OpenVULab Web component to provide a full experience record for users doing usability tests with VULab.

### Developers wanted

We are actively seeking developers who wish to contribute time to the project. Currently, we are testing a Drupal implementation and want to see that development continued. If you are interested in contributing, contact Ron Owston, Director, Institute for Research on Learning Technologies, York University, Toronto, Canada.

### Planning and Roadmaps Documentation

Note: some of this material has been superseded and may no longer reflect current thinking about OpenVULab.

- **The OpenVULab Project**
  - [OpenVULab Project Scope](#)
- **VULab Web Component**
  - [WEB Component Vision](#)
  - [WEB 0.5 Component Roadmap](#)
  - [VULab Web 1 Month Technical Roadmap - October 2008](#)
  - [Web Component Screen Shots](#) **NEW!**
- **RASCAL**
  - [RASCAL 0.5 Roadmap](#)

- [RASCAL - Integrating RASCAL 0.5B into a webpage](#) (Deprecated)
- [RASCAL Up to Date Readme](#)