TOPcast Episode 42: Designing for Synchronous Online Learning

Kelvin Thompson: This episode of TOPcast is brought to you by UCF Online. Twenty-plus years of award-winning online excellence, 75+ online programs, one of the largest and most innovative universities in the U.S. ucf.edu/online.

Tom Cavanagh: From the University of Central Florida's Center for Distributed Learning, I am Tom Cavanagh.

Kelvin: And I am Kelvin Thompson.

Tom: And you are listening to TOPcast: the Teaching Online Podcast.

Kelvin: Yup.

Tom: Yup. Here we are, listening to the Teaching Online Podcast.

Kelvin: And doing weird 70s voices.

Tom: Yeah, before we hit record, for some reason, we were reminiscing about the 70s when we were both quite young.

Kelvin: I don’t think I was born yet. I think I was—

Tom: Uh-huh.

Kelvin: (laughter) That’s not true.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: That’s not true.

Tom: (laughter)

Kelvin: But it’s like, yeah, weird stuff, you know? You get stuck in there from like…I was raised by television, Tom. So, you know, a lot of those voices and faces, I do kind of remember. They are like mother’s milk.

Tom: Yeah, well I heard a comedian say one time about Gilligan’s Island, which was a staple of my summer vacations.

Kelvin: Yeah, no.

Tom: Do you remember that Gilligan’s Island episode where they almost got off the island?

Kelvin: Yeah. (laughter) Every. Week.
Tom: (laughter) Yeah.

Kelvin: (laughter) So this is a thing. When I was indoctrinated into my college marching band, we went on our first away game trip on one of those charter buses. It turns out that they had this thing. I was like, “What in the world? I found my tribe.” You had your own little light switch above your head on the charter bus, and somebody would start the theme song from Gilligan’s Island. (singing) The weather started getting rough. The tiny ship was tossed. If not for the courage of the fearless crew, the Minnow would be lost. The Minnow would be lost. (mimicking thunder) And everybody started flipping the switches.

Tom: The lights? Oh my gosh.

Kelvin: (laughter) I was like, “Yes!”

Tom: So, everybody now knows Kelvin’s tribe.

Kelvin: (laughter) Some weird, geeky TV-watching people.

Tom: (laughter)

Kelvin: And coffee drinkers.

Tom: And coffee drinkers, probably keeping yourselves up on the bus ride.

Kelvin: That’s right.

Tom: And I hear the dulcet gurgles.

Kelvin: (laughter) That’s a good band name.

Tom: The Dulcet? (laughter)

Kelvin: The Dulcet Gurgles. (laughter)

Tom: Yeah. Yeah, they’re opening for the Indigo Girls this weekend here.

Kelvin: (laughter) Opening for—

Tom: Savoy, yeah.

Kelvin: Spastic colon. (laughter)

Tom: (laughter) Yeah. So, what is this that I see in my cup?

Kelvin: Yeah. That’s black gold, Texas tea. Oh, that was a whole different show.

Tom: Different 70s [show].
Kelvin: *(laughter)* That’s uh—

Tom: 60s and 70s.

Kelvin: 60s. Yeah, that is right. Jed Clampett. This, Tom, this…Where did I write this down? What is this? Oh yeah. This is a single origin Chiapas Mexico from Dunn Brothers Coffee in Minneapolis, Minnesota. So, this, Tom, this coffee is a reminder to me that timing is everything. In coffee as in comedy.

Tom: Do tell.

Kelvin: So, I walked into the lovely onsite Loring Park roasting location of Dunn Brothers Coffee on a Saturday morning right outside the park only to discover that if I had entered just the day before when I also walked by, in that moment, I could have saved a bunch of money because there was a heavily discounted Friday special on the just-roasted Chiapas. Nevertheless, I was happy to pay full price for the beans after I sampled a freshly brewed cup. So, timing is everything. So, why don’t you take a—

Tom: Take a little sip?

Kelvin: —pause, and see what you think of this, Tom.

Tom: *(sips)* I like it.

Kelvin: Uh-huh.

Tom: It’s good. Chiapas is a state in Mexico, isn’t it?

Kelvin: I believe that’s correct. Yeah, most of the single origins kind of get their name from either a region or a farm or a family who’s doing the roasting. So, Chiapas. Yep, uh-huh. So, do you get the connection?

Tom: I do, yeah.

Kelvin: Timing is everything.

Tom: Timing is everything.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: So, ask me what is the secret to comedy.

Kelvin: What is the—

Tom: Timing!

Kelvin: *(laughter)*
Tom: Timing is important in comedy and in education.

Kelvin: Yup. Sure. I got it.

Tom: I get it. So, that’s what we’re talking about today. We’re talking about live, synchronous, educational delivery.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Without being in person.

Kelvin: Yeah, all that.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: That’s right. That’s right. It is a funny thing. Like, I mean, not to go off on this, because we could. Some of our wording is weird, right? We’ve talked about this a little before. And I’m sure you all, the listeners, thought about this. Words like live, real time, virtual. They insinuate a lot, don’t they? Like real time as opposed to that—

Tom: Fake time?

Kelvin: Yeah or— (laughter)

Tom: Fake news, fake time.

Kelvin: What is that?

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: That’s right. And we, you know, we can talk about it a little bit if we want. We have here some conversations about setting up some special classroom settings to match one of our cousin service area, state colleges. They’re called synchronous learning, synchronous classrooms. Like well, isn’t all learning synchronous? (laughter) Don’t you learn wherever you are whenever you’re there? I mean— (laughter)

Tom: You’re parsing now, I think, a little bit.

Kelvin: I know, but I’m just saying.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: So, you know, we have this classic construct in our online education literature and thinking. Like, right? The whole time and place thing. You could imagine a quadrant, right? Same time, same place is like a regular face-to-face classroom. Different time, different place is what we might now call traditional classic online course.
Tom: Asynchronous.

Kelvin: Asynchronous, that’s right. Different time, same place. Different time, same place. Rare but there are some niche examples like even some lab kind of things or self-learning carols and particular contexts in the library or museums and so forth. And then same time, different place, which is really kind of our focus today.

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: You know, kind of, in various and sundry formats.

Tom: So, what we typically think about the affordances and the benefits of online learning we’re talking both temporal and spatial flexibility.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: In this kind of a model, you have spatial flexibility.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: But not temporal flexibility.

Kelvin: That’s right. That’s exactly right.

Tom: Ok, I’m just restating kind of what you just said.

Kelvin: No, and you said it better. That’s right. And I think it’s worth saying, right? We talk a lot about this here, and maybe our listeners do, too. You get the most flexibility with different time and different place, right? Because we talk about students can fit education into their lives more “nontraditional profile” they are the more, you know, they gravitate towards a different time, different place. But you can maybe get something back by having the same time, different place thing, but you maybe are losing something as well, right? You’re losing a degree of flexibility.

Tom: Right, yeah. I mean you definitely are losing a certain amount of flexibility because you have to, you know, sign in and be present at a certain time even if you’re at home or—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Whatever, at another state. But, you know, we always try to say here, let the content dictate the treatment.

Kelvin: Yeah.
Tom: If a particular objective must be accomplished by having that synchronous element, then, you know, it’s worth that lack of flexibility. And obviously, that’s a cost/benefit that every faculty or institution needs to weigh for themselves.

Kelvin: But you know, Tom, I just wonder if everybody who wants to make those kinds of decisions is doing that cost/benefit analysis.

Tom: Why, yeah. (laughter) Because we’ve had those conversation here, haven’t we?

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: Yeah. Well, I think it’s true. I think in some cases some people think it’s the easy way out in some ways. “Okay, I just need to sort of, you know, log in with my webcam, and I don’t have to change my practice at all,” but you really do.

Kelvin: Mmhm. Yeah, I mean some of those…Like even with my wording a moment ago, when you get something back, right? If you do real time that seems synchronous—

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: You get something back. Well, get some what? Get what back? What am I getting back? And I think the insinuation is I’m getting some of the human experience back. Well, are you? Is that a human experience just because we’re talking in real time? What? So, I think there is something there worth pulling on the thread a little bit. Our colleague here at UCF, Chuck Dziuban, you know, has been quipping for a couple decades now I think, “when did face-to-face become the gold standard against which everything else is measured?” And I think by implication, the synchronous thing is like some sort of a corollary to that, you know, that if you have synchronous, then you’re a little bit closer to a non-virtual, actual, real thing.

Tom: Right, it’s more authentic somehow.

Kelvin: More authentic somehow.

Tom: Yeah, but you can all imagine in your heads having a camera set up at the back of a large lecture hall—

Kelvin: Uh-huh.

Tom: On a wide shot, and having that be a pretty non-engaging experience. So, yeah. You can do it badly—

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: And do harm. (laughter) Educational harm.
Kelvin: Yeah, and the idea that you don’t need design, you don’t need thoughtful intentional decision making, you don’t need preparation, you don’t need support. Now I feel like I’m doing like a medical supply commercial for old people.

Tom: *(laughter)*

Kelvin: You don’t need preparation.

Tom: *(laughter)*

Kelvin: You don’t need support. *(laughter)* That it doesn’t have any negative impacts.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: You know, that kind of thing. I mean we have literally had conversations with colleagues about stuff like this. “It will just…They’ll be fine.”

Tom: Yeah. Well, in many cases there are legitimate, practical reasons why somebody would be exploring it, such as, you know, you’re connecting two locations—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Where you may not have sufficient enrollment to justify running a course in either one—

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: But together, you could. Or maybe you’re combining people who are kind of far flung at their own individual computers but in different locations—

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Around the state or around the country. Or maybe there are pedagogical reasons. I have talked to faculty here about, you know, doctoral graduate education and the kind of, you know, around-the-able small group seminar that they wanted to replicate online.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: It’s hard to do in that kind of a format asynchronously through a threaded discussion.

Kelvin: Right.

Tom: So, you know, there are valid pedological reasons to explore this kind of instruction, but it’s not a panacea and—

Kelvin: Right.
Tom: You can’t go into it without intentionality and good design.

Kelvin: Yeah, absolutely. And you know, I would say this: any literature I’ve ever seen about any kind of flavor of synchronous—the two that come to mind right this second are hyflex, which Beatty has written about, and Anders Norberg and our UCF colleagues Chuck Dziuban and Patsy Moskal have written about the time-based blended model—kind of like everything is online but it’s synchronous online and—

Tom: Can I stop you?

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Can you define for those who don’t know what hyflex is?

Kelvin: Oh sure, I can try that. I’ll probably get it wrong, but I’ll give it a shot. So, hyflex is like it’s, you know, one of my favorite devices, Tom. It’s a portmanteau.

(Tom: (laughter)

Kelvin: I know how you feel about those.

Tom: So, they can come to a face-to-face session whenever they want or if they prefer to log on and participate, they can do that if they want. The student has complete agency in that choice.

Kelvin: That’s right. So, it’s probably more a policy than, you know, anything, but it has implications for designs because it means you’ve got to think that through.

Tom: Right.

Kelvin: Everything has to be available everywhere in every way so that you cannot be disadvantaged by going to one, you know. “Well, I went to the face-to-face the other day and they didn’t address that”, or “I did the online thing and I didn’t get the same information that you guys got face-to-face” or whatever it was.

Tom: Can you elaborate a little bit on the time-based blended—

Kelvin: Yeah, sure thing.

Tom: That you eluded to?

Kelvin: So, online synchronous plus online asynchronous—no face-to-face—as a type of blended. So, blend. The challenge to our typical thing is not about space. It’s not
about, you know, you come to a place and you go to a virtual space. No, instead you stay in a virtual space. It’s just that you connect at the same time or you don’t connect at the same time. So, it’s a time-based blended approach. So, Chuck Dziuban and Patsy Moskal here at UCF have written about that with Anders Norberg, our Swedish colleague, and we’ve got some instructional designers including Rohan Jowallah, some others, who’ve been espousing that and wanting to experiment with that some more. And like everything else, I think it has its place, right? But where I was going is in both of those cases and possibly other synchronous-related stuff, anything I’ve read, it says the points that we’re making. There’s got to be intentionality.

Tom: Mmhmm.

Kelvin: You got to think it through. It’s got to make sense. There’s got to be support. You’ve got to communicate to students. You got to, you got to, you got to. It’s not just poof, it’s going to happen.

Tom: So, do you have any personal experience teaching one of these kinds of courses?

Kelvin: Yeah. I taught in a program that for a series of mysterious reasons it seems like it has one course section but two different modalities, you know. So, here we have W (online) and M (mixed mode or blended courses), so students can sign up for the M version or the W version—

Tom: Mmhmm.

Kelvin: But there’s only one of me and there’s only one course and I only get paid once. It’s an interesting design challenge—

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: —to really think that through to the point, and everything has to work everywhere. So, I had some positive experiences and less positive experiences. Here’s a quick thing. When I first was doing that, I’m like well, as an online learning guy, you can’t disadvantage the people who can’t come face-to-face or don’t want to come face-to-face. You can’t do something face-to-face that is going to leave other people out, right? That’s not good if it’s going to affect people’s grades or anything else. So, I first said, okay, well it will just be an optional, human moment, Q-and-A check-in, optional discussion. And then I’m like okay, well I got to do a little summary of what happened, then post that online so that at least there’s the cliff notes kind of version so people know that we talked about some stuff. And after like the first time that we met, you know, folks said, “Yeah, I’m not going back.” (laughter) And so, then a more positive example of another semester is I really wanted to make some usefulness out of this so [with] the nature of the course, it made sense—and the class meetings were already scheduled. They were handed to me like, “here’s the
meeting times. You’ve got to do something during these times.” So, I would have a guest speaker onsite, poor man’s shoestring streaming video and audio in real time and recorded, so, that if you wanted to come face-to-face you could meet with the guest speaker and hear her or him. If you wanted just to tune in in real time, you could listen to and hear and interact with and ask questions of the speaker, or if you couldn’t make it or didn’t want to, you could just catch the recording, and it didn’t matter which of those things you did because the only assignment was based upon the content of the presentation like a reflection or an application.

Tom: So that’s the hyflex aspect.

Kelvin: Yeah, that’s really—

Tom: That’s interesting.

Kelvin: Yeah, but to get to that part. (laughter) Took me a while to think that through—

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: —and you know, make sense of it. So, you’ve got to make strategic design choices regarding what to offer face-to-face. You’ve got to communicate clearly with students. Like I said, you can’t disadvantage anybody, and it’s got to add something. If you want that same time, same place, there’s got to be—in that hyflex model—there’s got to be something there. It can’t be like, “oh yeah, I’m not going back to that. That guy just showed up.”

Tom: Yeah, otherwise it’s just an online class that you’re teaching to an empty room.

Kelvin: That’s right, yeah, exactly. Exactly. So…

Tom: Well, you know, I know that we have had like best practices on our website—that might even still be there. If they are, we should link to them in the show notes—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: —about synchronous course delivery and design.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Or at least synchronous elements which is most of what we do here. We’ve got occasional exceptions where we’ll deliver something. But you know, it includes things like, you know, preparation. If it’s going to be connecting two classrooms together, we’re actually in the process of developing some best practices based on others’ experience. Like, classes can’t be too large. The technology has to be, you know…It can’t get in the way. You can’t have such a lag that it’s distracting or prevents you from learning. You have to have support at both sites.
Kelvin: Mmhmm. Yup.

Tom: Not just that one where faculty member is, and if possible, depending upon the geography, I’m a big fan of having that faculty member split time.

Kelvin: Absolutely.

Tom: Occasionally go to one site versus another site.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: It can probably be done well, having more than two sites connected.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: But it gets, I think, exponentially difficult the more sites you add.

Kelvin: That’s where the technology could probably make a difference if the platform is really designed to support that efficiently or something.

Tom: At a previous institution, I was part of a kind of early exploration of a system that they were trying to connect two different teaching sites where they were trying to ensure that they had enough enrollment to justify running that section. But a piece of technology that they ended up choosing was better suited to individual persons behind a computer, but they were piping it into a classroom where you might have six or eight people in the room, or more, and it wasn’t really optimized for like if you wanted to raise your hand, there’s one system for the room.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: So, they ended up—I think, after I left—evolving that into allowing people to be wherever and using that system, and maybe getting something else to connect those two classrooms.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: So, that technology choice, I think, is critical for success. Even if everything else is working, if you’ve chosen the wrong platform to have that synchronous connection, you can submarine all your efforts.

Kelvin: Yeah, and I guess just to call this out right, I think, probably, I think most of us who’ve been involved with online teaching and learning are probably most familiar with synchronous as a small island in the context of the ocean of an asynchronous course like optional synchronous office hours, optional synchronous review sessions for the midterm exam, or something like that. But you’ve already hinted at you could have the entire thing being synchronous or required.
Tom: Well, there’s a large and vibrant lecture capture vendor community.

Kelvin: Yes, there is.

Tom: And they’re doing something.

Kelvin: That’s right.

Tom: *(laughter)* That’s synchronous.

Kelvin: That’s synchronous.

Tom: Even if many students are consuming them on demand—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: At 2 in the morning and watching it at double speed—

Kelvin: Yes. *(laughter)*

Tom: Right before midterms.

Kelvin: You do hear the stories.

Tom: Hypothetically.

Kelvin: Hypothetically. *(laughter)*

Tom: Yeah. You could-

Kelvin: Oh, I didn’t know your voice was that deep. *(fast talking mimicking sped up audio)* I just thought it sounded like this!

Tom: Yeah. *(laughter)* You could go and watch it live, right?

Kelvin: Right.

Tom: Synchronously.

Kelvin: Right.

Tom: And that’s a version of this.

Kelvin: Yeah, that’s right. No, that’s exactly right. Or I think something we don’t see as often in the asynchronous online course world is like regular, required, synchronous sessions because it’s back to that what are you giving up? You’re giving up some of that flexibility. I signed up for a course that I was expecting to fit in to my own life and—
Tom: Right.

Kelvin: Now you’re telling me I got to come at a particular time.

Tom: Tuesday at 6 o’clock, I’ve got to log in.

Kelvin: Whether I like it or not.

Tom: Right. And I work, right, or whatever it is.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Yeah, and I also think that, you know, maybe one of those cost/benefit considerations is the level of interactivity that’s available versus what you’re willing to give up.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: So, for example, like a lecture capture system. I know many of them do have—

Kelvin: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: Interactive elements.

Kelvin: Yeah, yeah.

Tom: But if you think about just your generic basic lecture capture system where you are essentially broadcasting what’s happening in a classroom, so, it’s one to many.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: And especially if you’re allowing that to be consumed on demand—

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: After the fact—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Interactivity kind of goes out the window a little bit because it’s really hard for faculty members to manage—especially if the numbers go large, if you’re broadcasting essentially—as opposed to a point to point—

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: Or a platform that allows individuals to all log in and you can see all their names or maybe their faces, and they can raise hands, and you can give them control of the microphone or the whiteboard, or whatever it is. There’s, you know—I think
I've used this before—many flowers in this garden, right, and they all smell a little different.

Kelvin: (laughter) Some things smell.

Tom: (laughter) Yeah.

Kelvin: Different.

Tom: Well, I don’t know, any other point you want to make on this? I think it’s a rich topic, and frankly, it’s not something we do a ton of here compared to other schools, but it’s definitely part of our portfolio.

Kelvin: Yeah, absolutely, and it’s worth more thoughtful consideration, right? I guess maybe just reiterating a couple of design principles that at least suggest themselves to me. I’ll throw them out there and you see if you disagree with any of them. Fundamentally, what’s the problem you’re trying to solve with this synchronous offering?

Tom: That’s the right first question.

Kelvin: Whether it’s the whole course, whether it’s just a little element within the asynchronous course, what are you trying to solve? And then why is synchronous the best option for students in that particular channel?

Tom: Recognizing that you’re forcing them to give up half of their flexibility.

Kelvin: That’s correct. Which is also related to provide design support to faculty if at all possible. Either a trusted faculty colleague with a lot of experience or preferably a professional instructional designer so that that person can facilitate that. The stuff you talked about, the alignment with what are your goals for students, what are your instructional objectives, and how do these things all flow together?

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: You know.

Tom: Well, you know, there’s—not to interrupt—

Kelvin: No, please.

Tom: But there’s an interesting example that our colleague Wendy Howard is working on here: this international pilot that she’s been kind of working over the last several years.

Kelvin: Online abroad, she calls it.

Tom: Online abroad, yeah, and the idea is that she goes abroad with a class and a faculty member—
Kelvin: Physically on a plane.

Tom: Physically to another country and broadcasts back to the students in the States here in Orlando who could not travel.

Kelvin: Yeah.

Tom: For a variety of reasons—work or finances or whatever—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: But we still want to give those students an international experience.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: And Wendy’s able through kind of consumer technology—

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: To connect back to those students back in the States and allow them to be a live participant in whatever’s going on in Europe or South America, or some of the other places that she’s been, and ask questions, see what they see. She can point the camera around. She can represent their voice to the faculty and the other students in that class who might be walking down the street in Portugal or some place. It’s fascinating.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: And I think that doing something like that not just adds pedagogical value but cultural value for the student’s experience. It’s a high impact practice, you know.

Kelvin: That’s exactly what I was going to say. When you’re describing that, I’m thinking that’s absolutely classified as a high impact practice. And shout out here our friend and colleague, and sometimes TOPcast visitor, Katie Linder, has co-edited a book that’s coming up on online high impact practices. And as I recall, I got a chance to look at that in advance, and there’s some synchronous elements there that I think are really evocative as well across like multiple institutions and so forth. But design, design is what it comes back to, and communication with students. Institutional communication, if at all possible, like through modalities and definitions and stuff, but also individual and structured communications upfront.

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: Pre-syllabus.

Tom: Well, and to underscore, I mean the reason why I brought up Wendy’s online abroad is that, you know, your point about support for faculty.
Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: You could not reasonably expect a faculty member to do what Wendy does on these trips. They’re too busy being a faculty member.

Kelvin: That’s right.

Tom: So, you need to provide that level of support, both technical and kind of, you know—

Kelvin: Design.

Tom: Design and instructional, yeah.

Kelvin: Yeah, I agree with that. And all of your choices should be intentional and should be worthwhile, right?

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: Yeah, I think we’ve said all we can say about that because our time is like up and our—

Tom: And my Chiapas coffee is gone.

Kelvin: My Chiapas is—

Tom: Café muy bueno.

Kelvin: Yeah, whatever you said.

Tom: *(laughter)*

Kelvin: It was really good coffee.

Tom: Alright.

Kelvin: Maybe that’s what you said.

Tom: Yeah, something like that, I hope.

Kelvin: *(laughter)*

Tom: You want to give us the bottom line?

Kelvin: I don’t really do pithy, Tom, but I’ll give it a shot.

Tom: *(laughter)*
Kelvin: So, another ten minutes. I guess I’d say it’s important to be intentional. Intentionality has been a bit of a theme as we’ve been talking. It’s important to be intentional about our modality decisions. And this could be formal modalities like some other institutions have—online and blended—or informal modalities, like sub-modalities, like elements within a course experience or within a, you know, like a co-curricular experience, as well. It’s important to be intentional and to design and teach using best practices that are appropriate to those modalities. Now that’s as true of synchronous online offerings as it is of any other option that we have at our disposal.

Tom: That’s true. Good design is good design.

Kelvin: Good design is good design.

Tom: Well you know, now that we’ve landed the plane, but before we deplane and get onto the jet way.

Kelvin: Yes.

Tom: May I have a moment for a little plug?

Kelvin: Yes, have a plug.

Tom: So, a reminder to our wonderful listening audience that an episode of this very podcast TOPcast will be recorded live in front of a conference audience as part of OLC Accelerate 2018 in Orlando this fall.

Kelvin: Synchronously, we might even say. (laughter)

Tom: That’s right. That will be in November. So please, could you help us crowdsource the topic of this episode?

Kelvin: Please. Please.

Tom: (laughter) There’s a brief form at this URL. It’s http://bit.ly/vote_tcl. That’s TOPcast Live. That’s all lowercase. So again, it’s bit.ly/vote_tcl2018. We will put it in the show notes.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Please go and let us know what you think we should talk about in that episode.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.

Tom: Share it with your colleagues and the more votes we get, the better. Vote early, vote often.

Kelvin: Mmhmm.
Tom: We won’t tell if you vote more than once.

Kelvin: *(laughter)* That’s right. That’s true. And you know, hey, copy and paste that URL in an email to a colleague—

Tom: Yeah.

Kelvin: And send it to them. Get their opinion about what we should talk about.

Tom: Tweet it out.

Kelvin: Tweet it out.

Tom: And if you are going to be at OLC Accelerate this year, 2018, please join us. I did look at the conference schedule. It is on Wednesday.

Kelvin: Uh-huh.

Tom: So please look for us in the program. Kelvin, I imagine, might have some coffee.

Kelvin: I’m going to try to bring some coffee, yeah.

Tom: I might try to remember to bring some stickers.

Kelvin: Yeah, we’ll get some stickers.

Tom: And hopefully, you can be part of that recording.

Kelvin: We’d love to have you.

Tom: So, awesome. Until next time. For TOPcast, I’m Tom.

Kelvin: I’m Kelvin.

Tom: See ya!