

Tech Showdown – Tango vs Scribe

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Tech Showdown is a new, regular feature of JoHILA. Novel products, software, and technologies will be compared against each other to determine who is the winner, based on available features, ease of use, and price. If you have an idea for *Tech Showdown*, or would like to see a comparison of two particular technologies, please email Cass.

Databases, content platforms, booking systems, and catalogues. Where possible, we try to integrate systems to provide a seamless experience for the user; one interface, one point of access. Where that is not possible, we provide instructions on how to connect, search, or download. However, instructions can be time consuming to make, screen recordings are too big to send, and screenshots can be too small to read.

Enter the automated procedure maker.

In the blue corner, we have [Tango](#). In the red corner, we have [Scribe](#). Both products work in similar ways. Download the application as a Browser extension, click 'Capture', and start going through the process you would like to record instructions for. For example, if you want to capture how to search your catalogue for a user, simply navigate to your catalogue in your browser, hit "Capture" on the tool and complete the steps you would like to capture. Click "End" when you would like to finish. Every time you click on something, the product captures a screenshot of where you clicked and records it as a step. Once you have finished, you can then edit and describe the steps and reposition or draw on your screenshots. When you are satisfied with your instructions, you can send it as a live link.

Let's compare the two in detail.

Round 1: Features

Below are the features for the free plans.

Tango:

- Available as a Chrome extension.
- Can be exported to PDF.
- Instructions can be embedded in websites, such as LibGuides.
- Able to redact information in a screenshot, such as emails and passwords.
- Draw on and zoom in on screenshots

Scribe:

- Available as an extension for both Chrome and Edge.
- Can be exported to PDF.
- Instructions can be embedded in websites, such as LibGuides.
- Enable comments from people who viewed the instructions.
- See how many users viewed your instructions.

Winner – Tango. Being unable to redact information in a screenshot seems like a huge oversight, although it is available for the paid versions of Scribe.

Round 2: Ease of Use

For capturing actions completed in a browser, both tools do so in identical ways. The problem is when you want to capture something that is not online. Then you would have to purchase a plan for either product to access their desktop application.

In terms of reading the instruction, Scribe offers the ability to have 'alert' text. This is displayed in red and can be very useful when you want to make the user aware of something important. However, in screenshots of instructions, the mouse pointer is a small orange circle. If you click on something equally as small, the circle obscures it, so the user may be unsure what you actually clicked on.

Winner – Tango. Clicked items in screenshots have an orange rectangle around it. Users can easily see what you clicked on in the instructions.

Round 3: Price

Tango used to be completely free. It was only in recent weeks that they changed their subscription model. Existing users were recently warned that they would have to delete some of their instructions if they had more than 25.

Tango:

- Free plan
 - Up to 25 instructions.
- Pro plan - \$16 USD/month.
 - Unlimited instructions.
 - Access to desktop application.
 - Custom branding.
 - Ability to invite others to edit your instructions.
- Enterprise plan – no pricing information available.
 - The Enterprise plan is listed as "coming soon" and promises security benefits.

Scribe

- Free plan
 - Unlimited instructions
- Pro plan - \$29 USD/month

- Access to desktop application.
- Custom branding.
- Customisable screenshots.
- Enterprise plan – no pricing information available.

Winner – Scribe by a knockout. The Scribe free plan has an unlimited number of instructions that you can generate. You could get away with having multiple Tango accounts if you needed more than 25 instructions, but who has the time to manage all those accounts?

Winner

Of course, it depends on the needs of your library and users, but Scribe wins by a technicality. By limiting the number of instructions you can capture for a free plan, Tango has forced users to delete existing instructions, or create more accounts. There's also a risk that if you ask members of your team to create instructions using their personal accounts, you won't be able to edit them once they leave your organisation. If you use Scribe, you can keep all your instructions in one place.