CREATING SPLENDID VIDEOS
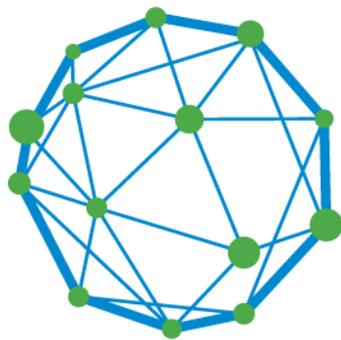

"Be sophisticated. Keep it Simple."

Steve Jobs

Tuesday, 11 April 2017

A PRESENTATION BY GRANT MACKENZIE FOR COLLABORATE 2017

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WHY ARE WE HERE

"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value."

Albert Einstein

"Indolence, of course, is an absolutely crucial part of the creative process: you do not find poets sitting in rows in cavernous word factories, staring at screens. They are rather to be found lolling on the sofa or strolling through the groves, nursing their melancholic temperaments and losing themselves in extended reveries."

Tom Hodgkinson

Today we are going to learn, in order, the steps in which it is logical to create videos.

1) Write the script (includes research).
2) Create the video visuals.
3) Create the voiceover.
4) Produce or render the video file.
5) Upload or release to the world.

To Achieve by End of Presentation

By 5 pm all participants should:

1) understand the video creation process
2) have the confidence to script, create and share videos.

WORDS WITH PICTURES

"I think that I will never see, A poem lovely as a tree."

Joyce Kilmer US Poetess 1886-1918

Content

As with all technical communications, the most important work is done before a word is written or an image moves. You need to determine:

▸ who is the audience - who is going to watch your masterpiece

▸ which voice will be most effective - formal or informal - personal or impersonal (videos with voiceovers tend to be less formal)

▸ what is the exact information to be passed on

▸ is context required

▸ are there logical points at which to partition the video.

Your intended audience will only watch your videos if they think they are getting something (knowledge, entertainment, training). Make sure that they know why they should care.

Don't sell the sausage - sell the sizzle (Not, "This is a very good sausage" But "They have heavenly taste sensations."). Sell the benefits.

Script

Always write the script first and be prepared to improve it as you go. In essence it is the same as anything you have ever written. Introduction - middle - end. Unless it is a very short video in which case just show and tell (such as many Excel videos).

The secret to writing is rewriting.

THE INTERFACE

Quote

"There are no rules in filmmaking. Only sins. And the cardinal sin is dullness."

Frank Capra

Content

Camtasia is the tool I will show. Any similar tool will enable you to do exactly the same things and create the same effects.

The Camtasia Interface:

- **Canvas**
  Area of the screen top right-hand corner. You see here what the video will look like. You configure the size of video. You determine the background colour of the video. It is endlessly resizable.

- **Clip Bin**
  This is where the component parts of the video are stored, ready for use in the video. These can be video clips, screencasts, images, audio clips and other media. All media which comprises the video will be here unless you have used media from the Library. Place media in the Library for reuse.

- **Library**
  This is a collection of media assets being coordinated groups of music, title sequences, and callouts. Double-click to preview. If there is something you use over and over again, you can add it to the library. Very useful for beginners to make them look good.

▶ **Callouts**

These are visual aids you can add to the videos to make them more readily understood. It includes, arrows, squares, crosses, blurs, text, highlights and more. You will use these items a great deal. Helps viewers to grasp what you are telling them. Use hyperlinks for branching and to link related videos.

▶ **Zoom and Pan**

Just what you would think. You can use this option to zoom in closer or to zoom out from areas on the canvas. You should use this option sparingly if video file size is an issue.

▶ **Audio**

Enables quick editing of audio tracks. Increase and decrease volume with one click. Fade in. Fade out. Silence tracks. Good for simple edits.

▶ **Transitions**

The standard Microsoft PowerPoint-like effects for the transition from one media item to the next. The time length is configurable. Use with care and be consistent or you will annoy the viewers.

▶ **Cursor Effects**

Makes the mouse pointer more obvious. Good for Dummies.

▶ **Visual Properties**

Your friend. More precise Zoom and Pan effects. Make items opaque. Rotate and shift items. Give them drop shadows, colorize, borders. Create green screen effects. Second most useful after Callouts.

▶ **Voice Narration**

Record voiceovers using microphone. iMovie on iPad is better.

▶ **Record Camera**

Record the real world using onboard camera. Good for visual voiceover.

▶ **Closed Captions**

Add captions to the screen. Speech-to-Text option available. You need to train the software to recognise your voice for this. Highly configurable. Excellent for viewers who are deaf, ESOL, or who do not have speakers on the device they are viewing the video.

▶ **Quizzing**

Create Quizzes. Automatically receive results in an Excel spreadsheet. Format not very configurable (or very pretty). Use only if another tool not available. Simple and reliable tool.

▶ **Record the Screen**

For creating screencasts. Custom and preset sizing of screen capture. Can be used with webcams. Can capture external and internal audio. F9 to start and Pause recording. F10 to stop recording. Capture the screen at the same size as the resulting video. More on that later.

▶ **Import Media**

Bring in your Camtasia recording files, video clips, graphics, and audio tracks. Build up a set of media files for reuse.

▶ **Produce and Share**

Render the files to one of the presets or use the Custom Settings to vary the file sizes and to use hotspots, captions or quizzing. Upload the video direct to Screencast.com, YouTube, or Google Drive. Produce videos which will play on all devices and in all browsers.

▶ **Timeline**

This is the engine room of the video where all the action takes place and the video constituent parts are ordered and configured. Visual media in the higher track numbers display over those in the lower track numbers.

Tip

The interface is highly configurable. It is easily resized so that the area you are working on has maximum space.

MOVING STILLS

"Of all of our inventions for mass communication, pictures still speak the most universally understood language."

Walt Disney

Content

Videos are a mixture of visuals. They can be a combination of real people acting, animated characters, plain words, screen captures and still pictures.

Videos thrive on movement. So still pictures or graphics can be more interesting if there is an apparent movement. Examples of the apparent movement of still pictures are the Ken Burns effect, the Helicopter effect and Parallax effect.

These examples are constructed in the same manner. The first section is a selection of graphics with no effects applied. The second half is the same set of graphics but with the named effect applied. The apparent movement makes the second half of each project more compelling and interesting.

Ken Burns Effect

Ken Burns is a documentary maker. When making his documentary on The West about the Wild West in the USA, there were plenty of still photographs and few moving pictures to work with. So he made the series of still images more interesting by applying what is now known as The Ken Burns Effect - a type of panning and zooming used in video production.

In it you combine either zooming in or zooming out with modest panning across the screen. When done well it draws attention to something on the screen - a face, an object, a vista. It is automatic on Apple iMovie.

Helicopter Effect

This is something which I have named. It cannot be an original effect. I discovered it one day, by mistake of course, and have never seen it anywhere else.

This involves stretching a still image disproportionately in one direction. For instance, if you stretch the picture upwards and downwards (but twice as much upwards as downwards) the viewer perceives it as though they are in a helicopter taking off. If the stretching is twice as much downwards as upwards, the viewer perceives it as though they are in a helicopter landing.

The Parallax Effect

By separating the background, mid, and foreground, you can animate your photos creating a parallax effect that will turn your simple 2D still images into moving 3D storytelling devices.

WWF Pictures here (http://nofilmschool.com/2013/11/tutorial-how-to-animate-still-photos-in-after-effects)

SCREEN CAPTURE

Quote

"On my desk I have three screens, synchronized to form a single desktop. I can drag items from one screen to the next. Once you have that large display area, you'll never go back, because it has a direct impact on productivity."

Bill Gates

Content

You capture the screen activity when you want to show someone else what is happening on your screen.

Resolution

Before you capture the screen you need to consider:

▶ where is my video going to be played (viewed)
▶ what resolution are you delivering to
▶ what is the resolution of my screen or camera
▶ what resolution are you shooting to?

Screen Resolution is the size of your screen commonly measured in Pixels. (most commonly 1920 X 1080 down to 1280 X 720 down to 854 X 480)

You should record in the highest resolution required. If you record at 1080p and edit at 720p then when you scale or zoom in you have a more clear picture as you have more pixels. Do it the other way round and you will get blur.

Another matter to consider is that if you record at very large dimensions (5K Retina Display) you will have very large files and this will slow down your computer unless it is very fast.

Remember This

Things to keep in mind when capturing the screen are:

▶ **Size**
   screen capture size is Full Screen, Custom or Preset.

▶ **WebCam**
   you can film yourself explaining what you are doing on the screen

▶ **Audio**
   microphone and system recording

▶ **Background**
   where appropriate (blank Word page)

▶ **Practice**
   practice practice practice

▶ **Slow**
   perform tasks slowly - speed up on timeline (See Make It Snappy)

▶ **File Naming**
   file naming convention (See File Wrangling)

▶ **Jing**
   They see what you see.

Tip

It is standard practice to capture the screen at the size/resolution as the video will play or greater.

VIEWER CAPTURE

"Don't go into Mr McGregor's garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs McGregor."

Beatrix Potter from The Tale of Peter Rabbit (1902)

Content

Your video needs to be audio-visually stimulating to keep the interest of the viewer and to make it easier to understand. You can use:

- callouts
- zoom and pan
- object properties
- transitions
- multi screens
- interesting voiceover
- audio clips
- background music.

MAGIC MOMENTS

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

Arthur C. Clarke

Content

Where possible, every video should have something which makes the viewer go "Wow". Steve Jobs calls these moments in his presentations his "Holy Smokes" moment. I call these Magic Moments.

They come in a number of ways but here are four of my favourites.

▸ **Sensory Dissonance**
This occurs when what the user is seeing and the user is hearing appear to be completely unrelated (to the extent that they may wonder what on earth is going on). However, then there is the glorious moment when the visuals and the voiceover align and the point is made with a clarity unlikely to be forgotten. (burger lunch example) (Litter dancers)

▸ **Oxymoron, Antithesis and the Non Sequitur**
The insertion of a picture so unlikely as to cause laughter. (Nobel prize winners lunch)

▸ **The Kitten Response**
We walk around with every fact known to humans in our pockets and what do we do? We look at endless pictures of cats and kittens. Because they are sweet. I work as an adjunct to the Roading industry. So wherever I can I insert a clip of something really sweet and Road-related. (Street Sweeper). (Holiday lady and daughter)

▸ **The Visual Stunner**
Sometimes you are able to create a fabulous visual effect. When RAMM GIS, our Geographic Information Service was introduced, it was very exciting but not exactly feature-laden. So the introductory video needed to start with some pizzaz. (Map overlay on Google Earth).

FILE WRANGLING

"The current medical records system is this: room after room after room in a hospital filled with paper files."

Timothy Murphy

Content

Once you have made a few videos you will be amazed at the number of files required for one simple one minute video.

So you will need a proper file system for optimum efficiency. This is for your video creation files, your video production files and your reusable clips and stills:

▶ subject, web site files, subject, subject media
▶ My Graphics
▶ legal sources of clips and audio.

Tip

Do not name your .trec files clip1, clip2, clip3 and so on. Give them descriptive names such as girl looks at tree, girl climbs tree, girl falls. Then when you want to reuse them, it is obvious what is on the clip.

MAKE IT SNAPPY

"More will mean worse."

Kingsley Amis *Encounter* (July 1960)

Content

Long contemplative scenes work well in some movies - not in instructional videos:

▸ edit down voiceover script (Session 1)
▸ adjust clip speed
▸ edit out errors
▸ edit out irrelevancies
▸ very short introduction and ending.

COSMETIC SURGERY

"You know, let's put it this way, if all the people in Hollywood who have had plastic surgery went on vacation, there wouldn't be a person left in town."

Michael Jackson

Content

The last thing before the voiceover should be to watch the video from end to end as you read out the script to make sure that it is perfect. You must:

▸ ensure that the words fit the action on the screen
▸ the visuals are smooth (unless jarring for effect)
▸ it looks great
▸ take action to fix all blemishes.

Vector Art vs Raster Art (Why is my Picture Fuzzy?)

JPG, PNG and GIF are referred to as Raster files. That is because they are based on pixel numbers (eg 854 X 480). They are referred to as Lossy (because as they are enlarged, they lose clarity).

EPS, AI and some PDFs are referred to as Vector files. That is because they are based on mathematical calculations. They are referred to as Lossless (because when they are scaled up, they retain their original clarity)

Vector Art is not pixel-based so it is resolution-independent. Some Camtasia Call-outs are vector images and so do not lose quality when enlarged.

Update

Once you have made a video, the subject matter may change. A simple name change on a button can be updated quite simply.

TALK TALK

"The secret of success is sincerity. Once you can fake that you've got it made."

Arthur Bloch in *Murphy's Law Book Two : More Reasons Why Things Go Wrong* (1980)

Content

The voiceover can make or break the video. It can be as important to the viewer as what they are seeing on the screen.

Remember these:

▸ sound interested
▸ use a good microphone
▸ use iMovie
▸ use a script
▸ timing is everything
▸ last thing you do before video production.

Tip

Always smile as you talk when recording the voiceover - it will show.

THE PRODUCERS

"Don't mistake activity with achievement"

John Wooden

Content

The penultimate step in the video production cycle is to produce the video or to render the video files. What you do depends on where the video will be viewed. Some options are:

- ▶ **Direct Upload to YouTube, Google Drive, Vimeo, Screencast.com et al**
  For this you need an account on these providers and to know your login details. I never use these as I always watch my videos from start to finish before uploading them. Also, when uploading to YouTube there are more options from the YouTube Channel Manager.

- ▶ **MP4s of various resolutions**
  MP4 is the industry standard video file format. You would choose these presets for fast rendering at specific output resolutions. I never use these as I like to have more control over the finished video file.

- ▶ **WMV, MOV, AVI, M4V**
  Proprietary outputs which you would use if you were outputting to a proprietary environment where everyone used Microsoft or Apple software.

- ▶ **MP3**
  Industry standard for audio files. Useful when visuals and audio are being created on different machines.

- ▶ **OGG, WEBM**
  Open source outputs (not available from Camtasia but from free solutions such as MIRO and video.online-convert.com). Useful if creating videos for users with older browsers if you use Video for Everybody by Camen Design.

▶ **MP4 Smart Player (Camtasia Only)**
This is the one I use. It works in all browsers and on all mobile devices. It gives control over file size and resolution. It wraps files around the video for controller and preview thumbnails. It can also be used to render a table of contents, captions, quizzing and more.

UPLOAD, SHARE AND DISPLAY

"It used to happen in villages and towns in China that they would have - I guess you'd call them beauty contests - where all of the women of a particular village or town would be seated behind these screens or curtains with only their feet showing."

Lisa See

Content

Now where are the viewers going to watch the videos? Will it be:

▶ YouTube

▶ Vimeo

▶ Web Site

▶ DVD

▶ Natively.

Delivery System

You can:

▶ share a video using WeTransfer

▶ share videos by saving them to flash drives and DVDs

▶ upload a video to YouTube (and Vimeo)

▶ use the YouTube embed code to embed a video onto a web page

▶ use the Camtasia production files to view a video on a web site

▶ use the video tag to view and size a video on a web site.

Tip

If none of the above works as your audience uses very old versions of browsers, type "video for everybody by Camen Design" into Google and follow the instructions.

WRAP UP

"To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive."

Robert Louis Stevenson (*El Dorado*) 1881

Content

Questions and revision

It is time for a comfy chair and a gin.

Tip

Always watch your videos all the way through one last time before you post them.

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