

Video Production: A Guide



by the Educational Media Services Team, IT Services

Planning a Video for the Web.

Here are a few basic guidelines for planning a short promotional film for web use.

Pre-Production

1. Ideal length of the film should be no more than 3-5 mins. This does depend on the type of film that you want to make, but research shows that most viewers switch off if the film is longer than this, unless it is of specialist interest.
2. Ask yourself “who is my target audience?” Once this is clear in your mind then that will help you decide the style of video that you should aim for. Take a look online to see if there are any films that reflect that style. This will also help us to understand your expectations.
3. What are the key messages that you want to put across? This will provide the framework for the film and will help us plan the script/story board more effectively if we understand the story you want to tell.
4. Do you have any key members of staff or contacts that are happy to be filmed, or more importantly, know how to put over your key messages in a confident style? If not then we may need to think of a different style of video using more graphics and voice over.
5. Do you have any extra graphic material that can be incorporated into the film - ie photographs, images, pre-existing film footage, computer generated animations (of experiments or research projects, for example). Anything like this will help keep the costs down.
6. Once you have all this information, then we should be able to understand how long it will take to film/edit and give you an accurate quote.
7. We will work with you to draft a story board/script for the film, taking into consideration the information you have provided.
8. Once the story board is agreed then you will need to check the availability of the key people involved in the filming and the suitability of the locations. When filming anything that requires clear audio (ie interviews/narration) then it is essential the rooms that we use are as quiet as possible. We will always try to have a ‘recce’ around the locations beforehand in order to identify any potential problems in advance and to ensure there are no surprises on the day.
9. Once we know the availability of people and locations then a date/dates for filming can be confirmed.
10. It is useful to alert people on location that filming will be taking place by putting up signs in the area.
11. If possible, a parking place for the units van should be booked in order for us to transport the equipment necessary for the filming. However, if this is not possible then access to a suitable drop off point is essential.

Production

1. **Set-up.** We will arrive in time to set up for the first shot. This normally takes us around 30 mins depending on the complexity of the scene. There will normally be 1-2 technicians in attendance. Unless the script indicates otherwise, we will bring with us 1-2 cameras, a 3 point lighting kit and microphones. We will need access to power for the lights unless filming outside or in a well lit room.



2. **Interviews** will normally take around 30 mins per 3-5 minute interview. This includes performing a sound check and running through the interview 2-3 times. We would recommend having someone off camera prompting the interviewee with

questions rather than them trying to learn great chunks of script. Interviewees should try and answer the prompts in complete sentences (ie refraining from saying 'yes' or 'no' answers etc). As a general rule the interviewee should not look at the camera but slightly to one side as if talking to someone off camera. The only time one should look directly into the camera is if they are delivering a personal message, sales pitch or acting as a presenter.

3. **B-Roll.** This is the term we use for footage that is filmed to support the narration or interview audio. The 'Wallpaper' of the film. This will include general footage of buildings, people, events, objects etc. What B-Roll footage we film is usually dictated by the narration or the content of the interview/s. So unless there is a good reason, it is usual to record the interviews first, although this isn't set in stone.



Post - Production

1. All the footage shot will be imported onto our local storage and the most suitable extracts edited together as per the storyboard/script, using our edit software (Final Cut Pro). A 3-5 min film will usually takes around 2-3 days to edit, sometimes less depending on the complexity of any graphics used.
2. All extra graphic material that needs to be included - ie photos, images, pre-existing film footage/animation etc - should be sent to us before the edit process begins. We should also be informed of any other branding such as logos, crests or fonts. It is important that you have permission to use any of this material and any copyright issues should be resolved before the film is signed off.
3. Any text information that needs to be included in the film should also be sent to us in advance of the editing. (ie Title of the film, credits, names/ titles of interviewees, key information that you might want to include like contact details, website addresses etc)
4. We would normally use a graphic template for the opening sequence, titles and any transitions between shots and royalty free music. We will try and identify what we think is most suitable to give it a consistent feel in keeping with the tone and style of your film.
5. Once we have generated a rough draft of the film, we will then send it through to you for approval and to advise of any minor adjustments, before a final version is made. We generally provide the finished version as an MP4 or .mov file which is suitable for upload to channels like YouTube, Vimeo or our own Podcasts @ Oxford site. If you require a different format then we need to be informed beforehand.
6. If the film is to go on the Oxford iTunesU site then the Podcast Contribution Form must be completed by participants and returned to us. This can be downloaded at: www.ox.ac.uk/itunes_u/contribute