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HOW SMALL MAGAZINES CAN MAKE AND POST VIDEOS CHEAPLY AND EASILY

LET'S FIRST TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU SHOULDN'T DO.

How many times have you watched a video on YouTube and the first thing that makes you cringe is the audio quality. Sound matters... a lot. You could shoot Citizen Kane quality video but if your audio is popping or scratchy or just too low to hear it without straining, all of that work is thrown in the garbage.

The same can be said if your audio is pristine but your video is taken from your phone vertically or is too dark or out of focus (or a million other things). I'm not saying that everything has to be perfect but everything has to be good enough.

THE TOOLBOX: WHAT SHOULD YOU HAVE?

It will depend on what you are shooting, but let's say you will be interviewing someone for a cover story and you want to put a up a video teaser for the magazine; the first thing you will need is a good quality wireless Lavalier Microphone—the ones that clip to your lapel. Sony or Sennheiser are two good places to start for brand names.

The camera is your mainstay. You need to think ahead to what you want to be shooting and buy the camera that will suit those needs. You can't go wrong with Canon or Sony here, though Canon seems to have the edge this year. Remember, prosumer is the way to go here, if you can buy it at a Radio Shack than it's not for you.

One thing you also need to have in your bag of tricks is some sort of lighting. You don't want your subject looking like they are in the witness protection program because you were too cheap to buy a few lights, do you?

A good brand here is Lowell, as they actually provide kits specific to certain types of situations. For instance, if you're interviewing someone you actually should be using 3 lights. One to light the subject (Key Light), one to fill in the shadows of the subject (Side/Fill Light) and one to illuminate the space behind the subject so he or she stands out from the background (Back/Hair Light).

YOU HAVE YOUR FOOTAGE. NOW WHAT?

Congratulations. You now have your 50 minute interview captured for the world to see... but should they see the whole thing? Not unless you want them to hear all of your subjects um's and ah's or your interviewer mispronouncing their name or some other gaff that always seems to happen in these situations.

Edit. Edit. Edit. To get the feel of that interview across to your viewers you may only need 3 minutes of that footage or less. Pacing is key to a good video. Utilizing parts of a sentence or phrase may make more sense than watching the person go on and on when the question has already been answered. Keep it simple... period.

B-ROLL IS YOUR FRIEND.

What is b-roll? Think of it as extra information that you want your viewers to see to get your point across. It can consist of a photo, video footage of the subject's product or factory or office façade, or a rolling field of wheat—provided the subject is talking about a rolling field of wheat.

Using b-roll can be a great way to cover an otherwise awkward edit, such as when your subject actually leans out of frame, which would typically render that scene's video content unusable. Adding b-roll overtop of that point in the video allows you to continue to use the audio portion of the footage, while viewers see your rolling wheat that adds importance to that point in your interview.

SOFTWARE IS YOUR FRIEND.

Whether it is a Mac or PC, iPad or iPhone, there is editing software for you that is easy to use and usually free. Apple provides you with iMovie which is the best piece of editing software for the new user bar none. Intuitive and simple, iMovie will let you create a masterpiece in editing provided you know the story you want to tell.

There are higher end software suites like Final Cut Pro X and Adobe Premiere. These are definitely great things to learn if you've had some experience in the video editing field, but if you are just starting out, iMovie is the way to go.

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**STORY MATTERS.**

The best thing you can do for any video that you want to shoot, whether it's an interview or the next great zombie flick, is to get yourself a list of things that you need to accomplish to tell your story.

If it's an interview, have the questions you'd like to ask printed out for you (with room to write notes as the interview progresses). Editing allows you to ask the question more than once if the subject seems hesitant or is unsure of the answer the first time. The question list allows you to check off what has been answered properly and whether or not you should ask a question again at the end of the interview to get a better phrased answer.

For any video, have a list of the shots that you would like to see in the final product. Make a storyboard if you feel you need to have a visual representation of the video as you shoot it. This will help to make sure you're getting everything you want in frame.

POST IT.

YouTube is the best way to get your video out there. You

only need to make a YouTube account, setup your Channel and upload your video. Once you do that you can add a description to the video—make sure it's a good one, so that it will appear under appropriate search results.

The best thing that YouTube provides for you as a publisher is a little piece of code call the 'embed' tag. This code allows you to add your video to your website. The benefit of the embed tag is that YouTube still hosts the video and takes care of all of the back end stuff like streaming, but it is seamlessly embedded within your site as if it was made to be there.

ONE MORE THING.

The great thing about the age that we live in now is that anything that you have a question about is at your fingertips. The Internet will tell you what you want to know about video no matter what the question. Online forums and user groups are willing to help anyone out, whether they are just starting or a professional videographer. All you have to do is ask.

FIN.

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