

MULTIMEDIA SURVIVAL

ALL GREAT MULTIMEDIA IS ABOUT EMOTION ←

You remember 25% of what you see, 50% of what you hear and 100% of what you feel!

STORY ARC

A person is not a story, a place is not a story, an event is not a story.

Great stories have conflict or change: example “ I used to be like that, something happened (conflict), now I’m like this (change).”

Great characters make great stories.

Every story has two parts: A series of events and a reflection. A series of events is “ I went here then I did that and then this happened.” The reflection is most important: “what did I learn?” “What does this mean?” “Why should I care”

Try to get people to tell you a story with a beginning, middle, end and a reflection.

Great audio is about memory, emotions and the senses. Anything else can be communicated with a subtitle.

Numbers, names, statistics etc can be communicated in a text slide. Feelings cannot be communicated in a text slide.

Make CCR your mantra: conflict, climax, reflection.

Be quiet: your questions will be cut . Don’t talk over their answers. Don’t umm and ahhh. Use body language or nod your head. Always keep eye contact.

AUDIO

Humans are designed to take in most of our information through our ears, not our eyes. (As a photographer, learning this fact of science was a shock)

If the audio is good and your pictures are weak, people will tolerate it BUT if the audio is bad and your pictures are great, people will bail. Make sure your audio is great.

Wear headphones that cover your ears whenever you’re recording. It allows you to hear exactly what your recorder is capturing. Earbuds don’t work. Not wearing headphones is like shooting pictures without looking through your camera.

Room Tone: Record 60 seconds of the sound of the room wherever you go. Try to interview in a quiet room: turn off the radio and TV. But where ever you are, record the sound of the room with no one talking. This is crucial for editing.

Closer: Get the microphone close to the person speaking, 6 inches from their mouth or closer, the the lollipop position.

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Settings:

never use MP3, use wav or aiff or PCM instead,

If you're recording audio that will be used in FCP, use 48 MHz.

If you're working in SoundSlides, use 44 MHz.

Levels are like exposure in photography. If they're under -12, they're way underexposed. Be sure they don't go over 0. Set your levels so they are generally between -12 to -6 dB and leave them.

Do not use Auto Gain Control.

Find a quiet place for the interview

Natural or Ambient Sound

Spend a few minutes gathering ambient sounds, that is, the storytelling sounds of your story, and your sense of the place will be greatly enhanced. Start by identifying the sound, then record 30 seconds of the sound. Ex "Sound of Egg Frying")sizzzzlllllee.

Get the microphone really close to the source of the sound.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Always do the interview in a quiet place. Turn off the radio or TV in the background

We use a style of story telling called non-narrated storytelling. The good news is that there's no narrator between the subject and the listener/viewer. The bad news is that you'll need to get your subject to tell the complete story. If they don't say it, it didn't happen. Yes, this is hard.

The questions and your voice will be cut out. So please make sure they interviewee responds with a full context of the question. For instance, when asking "How old were you when you won the lottery?" and the answer is "25," the only thing you can hear in the story is the word "25."

The trick is in the way you ask the questions and in careful listening to be sure you have all the pieces you need to have a complete story. How do you do this?

Ask questions that are related to feelings, the senses, memory and emotions.

You want to avoid asking questions that have "yes" or "no" answers. Try starting a question with something like: "Tell me a story about..." or "Walk me through what happened, step by step..."

Stack your questions in two and three: "Tell me your name, your age and what you do."

Don't talk over their answers. Don't umm and ahhh. Use body language and eye contact.

Don't be afraid to re-ask a question. They may answer in a more interesting/usuable way. Often the second or third answer will be more concise.

Ask about memories. Ask them to remember how this or that felt. Get them in the "memory space."

Don't be afraid of silence. Let them fill the silence. DON'T STEP IN. If they don't start talking (they almost always will), repeat the last three words they said. Example: "... and then I couldn't take it anymore." (subject pauses and doesn't continue the thought.) you say: "you couldn't take it anymore?" Ask in an inquisitive way. This shows you are paying attention and tuned in and will get them rolling again.

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You must be thinking during the interview. Am I getting full and clear sentences? What is the focus of the story? Try to keep them on topic. If they veer off topic. Go back to it: "That's really interesting, but can you tell me more about _____?"

Listen like an editor: Do you have an opening? middle? ending? conflict? emotional story?

Get room tone, the sound of the room. 30 seconds with no one talking and no one moving. This is very crucial for smooth editing.

Just before you capture room tone, ask the interviewee to summarize whatever you talked about in a single sentence.

Always ask at the end: "Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?" or "Is there anything I haven't asked you?"

VISUALS for still or video

Multimedia is about time. Studies show that an average person looking at a newspaper or magazine spends less than 1 second looking at a published photograph. The average time your still image stays on screen is about 3-4 seconds so you'll need a lot of photos, a lot of good photos

Shoot sequences. Multimedia and video uses a series of images to tell a story so a single frame is never enough. Vary your position on every shot and shoot tight, medium and wide images.

Multimedia loves closeups. Shoot 50% closeups. Of course shoot that amazing shot that will run 2 pages in GEO but without close ups, there is no way to connect all those medium and wide shots that run in Magazines.

If you read any classic novel, details are king. Same for multimedia: in stills or video, you can never have enough close ups.

Try to photograph their photographs and snapshots, family pictures, file pictures, details from the past, awards, mementos.

Stills or video? Video is best for motion. Still is best for concentration on the singular moment.

Multimedia is an all-horizontal world. Don't shoot verticals.

VIDEO

Make sure your batteries are charged, your lens is clean and that you have lots of extra tapes/ cards.

Use the lowest gain setting possible

Custom white balance every shot

Shutter speed: (HDSLR) 1/30 - 1/125 of a second

Use your amazing eye to frame and compose and see light in video in the same way you compose your stills.

Use a tripod. Yes, it's a pain but any camera motion takes you out of the story. Ever see the images on a gallery wall vibrate? You will if you're not using a tripod for your video.

Hold every shot steady for at least 10 seconds. anything shorter than 10 seconds can't be used.

Video is about action and the empty frame.

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A great video shot has three parts: 1) start with an empty frame, 2) something or someone enters the frame and something happens (action) then 3) something leaves the frame, thus you end on the empty frame. Video looks at the extended moment. You need to be rolling before the decisive moment, during the decisive moment and after the decisive moment leaves the frame.

Don't ever zoom while rolling video.

Move around and get multiple angles, including above and below your subject.

Set your levels so they are generally between -12 to -6 dB and leave them.

Remember POV: The readers Point of View, then the books Point of View.

Story telling in video is about the sequence of images. In every situation you need to shoot a wide shot (WS) Medium shot (MS) close up (CU) and Extreme close up. (ECU). You can instantly tell that someone is good at making images in video if 50% are close ups or extreme close ups.

Be sure to get great audio.

MOST IMPORTANT > Folder Structure

Example Project Folder > FCP
 Audio
 Video
 Images
 Output
 Transcripts
 Z_Render

Notes on Workflow and Process

Transcribe and transcript process (You can do this now since your interview is done)
Start editing Images (you'll need a break from transcribing and sense of what you have)
Build the story in Transcript - Heavy creative time - STORY STORY STORY
Finish editing stills - Export: 2880 px at 72 dpi, Apple RGB
Import assets
Cut Interview quotes
Recreate Transcript in main FCP Sequence
Now, think about ambient audio experiences
Music? What and where?
Complete the "radio" cut
Now, visuals come into play. Do you have b-roll video or just stills?
Follow the map layed out by your radio cut.
Time away. Feedback from others.
Cut cut cut. We begin with a scalpel and end with a hatchet.
Mix audio. room tone.
Color Enhancement
Export and encode
Drink Bourbon!