



Video Tricks

Ask “why” before asking “how?”

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“How’d They Do That” Video Session

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Simplicity is king.

I. News Video is nothing new. We can learn a lot from those before us.

A. Keep: great voice over writing, great storytelling, and tight packages.

B. Avoid: “meat and potatoes” photography sensationalized video, etc.

II. Video storytelling. Keep it simple. Have fun.

A. Video

1. Clean, steady 10-second takes. 95% of my shots are static

2. Clean & concise interviews. Ask them to restate if necessary

B. Audio

1. Gather good natural sound for every video.

2. Use a lavalier or hand-held cardioid condenser for all interviews

C. Editing

1. Simple transitions.

a. Hard cut (99% of my cuts)

b. Fade (used for my lower-thirds + end slate)

III. Tricks. Tools in the toolbox

A. Ask “why” before asking “how?”

B. Use the right tool for the right job

My Gear

- Solid state Sony PMW EX1 True HD progressive camera
- Tripod with fluid head + head leveler
- Wireless lavalier mic (Sennheiser G2 kit)
- Wireless condenser mic
- Shotgun Sanken CS-1 (narrow field)
- Canopus box
- Zylight portable LED light source
- Small Lowell hot lights
- Sony HVR A1U HDV camera (more portable)
- Apple MacBook Pro
- Apple Cinema Display
- Final Cut Pro Studio 2
- Sony MDR V-6 Studio headphones
- Other World Computing 200gb firewire phantom power hard disk

My workflow

- Ingest footage (log notes on bigger packages)
- Lay down narrative backbone. Usually A-Roll
- Construct intro with intrigue (hopefully!)
- Put together nat-sound & strong visual sequences
- Lay down nat-sound sequences to narrative. Think pacing and flow--visual & Audio.
- Lay down other appropriate B-Roll
- Adjust audio levels and smooth audio transitions (pen tool)
- Drop in lower thirds
- Watch final cut of package and make final edits
- Render
- Export flat QuickTime file (reference file if on deadline)
- Compress .flv files in Sorenson squeeze (it takes around 5-times duration of package using our HD footage)
- Write title, caption, get frame-grab, tone, and then save for web in Photoshop
- Watch & test compressed .flv files
- Upload .flv files to server
- Media manage and save on external disk + network drive
- Get out of the office. Enjoy life (mandatory).

My Examples of the tools of the toolbox in action

Natural Sound:

Fighting Famine in Ethiopia. Interviews in Ethiopia and DC

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-08-17-ethiopia_N.htm

Pope Mass in D.C. (Daily package) Live music collected

http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2008-04-17-popeballparkvideo_N.htm

The Historic Presidential Nomination of Obama (Daily package)

http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-08-27-obama-cover_N.htm

Tony Hawk. Remote device video capture with Canopus box, archival photos from AP + Hawk, newspaper pdf, mic'ed while skating, 4-up video sequence

http://www.usatoday.com/money/companies/management/2008-03-09-tony-hawkentrepneur_N.htm

Traumatic Brain Injury Additional footage from The Army Times

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2008-07-23-brain-injuries_N.htm

You Tube star. Video material acquired from subject

http://www.usatoday.com/life/people/2008-03-31-hardesty-youtube_N.htm

Castro Resigns. Click "No Change in Cuba with Raúl" (Daily Package) Archival stills over interviews

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2008-02-19-us-castro_N.htm

Vietnam War Memorial 25th Anniversary. (Daily Package) Text introduction with live music collected

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-11-10-vietnammemorial_N.htm

Voice Over:

Hurricane Gustav. Click "Survival of the Lower Ninth Ward"

(Daily package) Voice over to give historical context while archival photos tell visual story

<http://www.usatoday.com/weather/hurricane/gustavvideo.htm>

Bradley Fighting Vehicle. VO from reporter interwoven throughout

http://www.usatoday.com/news/military/2008-06-25-Bradleys-reset_N.htm

Resources

www.multimediashooter.com

FCP Library of manuals

<http://www.lafcpug.org/>

Video Inspiration

The Washington Post

Detroit Free Press

Los Angeles Times

The Dallas Morning News

NPR

Raw/Raw-ish video

Protests at the DNC. (Daily package) Compelling video with only a semi-complete story
<http://blogs.usatoday.com/onpolitics/2008/08/from-the-street.html>

Hurricane Gustav. Click on "Inside the storm" (Daily package) Raw footage with reporter narration during spot news event.

<http://www.usatoday.com/weather/hurricane/gustavvideo.htm>

Stills Turned Video

A kinder, gentler TSA. (Daily package) Text, music, stills. A still photographic assignment I decided to turn into a stop-motion video experience. Music from Apple Garage Band and FCP Studio 2 libraries

http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2008-03-30-tsa_N.htm