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Shooting a video interview is something that anyone can do, but it takes practice to produce a quality product. In this workshop, we will discuss and practice techniques for planning and shooting an effective video interview.

Applying the filmmaking process
to a video interview project

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You just found out that a decorated expert in your field of study is visiting UCSF in one week, and you've been tasked with creating a video interview of them. The video will be shown to a number people in your department and archived for future viewing. The problem, is that you have two other projects due next week, and you do not have videography experience. So, where do you begin?

Let's use the **5 Phases of Filmmaking*** as our guide throughout this creation process. While the idea of following a stepped process may seem like overkill; it is not, and should actually save you time.

The first phase in the process is **development**. During development you should clearly define your goals for the project. What is the message that you and the interviewee wish to convey,

and what questions should be asked to lead the interview? This is perhaps the most important, and yet most often overlooked phase in the process.

Phase 2 is **pre-production**. Here you will find a location for the interview, identify your assets (such as the equipment you'll be using), and schedule the interview.

In phase 3, **production**, you will execute your plan and record the interview. Be sure to get set-up early, so you're not scrambling at the last minute with "technical difficulties!" If possible, enlist an assistant.

Phase 4 is **post production**, during which you will transfer the video to computer and edit as necessary. If you planned well, this phase can be enjoyable and relatively quick, assuming you aren't attempting anything fancy. Often, you will only need to trim your video, add a few titles, and

publish the video to the proper format.

This leads to phase 5, which is **distribution**. Using various tools, you will convert and compress your video accordingly. For example, you could upload the video to the UCSF Podcast server, upload it to YouTube, or burn it to a video DVD.

It is all-too-common for inexperienced videographers to spend little or no time on Phases 1 and 2, struggle with Phase 3 as a result, and then find themselves spending an unexpected amount of time on the final two phases as they try to salvage a quality product.

The moral of the story is: plan, prepare, and then have fun with the project! If you need help throughout this process, remember that The Learning Technologies Group is available to provide guidance.

* http://www.filmunderground.com/180/article/NWFS/Page/1/Five%20Phases%20of%20Filmmaking.htm

Shooting better interviews
tips and tricks

There are many technical considerations to make when shooting an interview. All decisions that you make along the way should be consistent and follow your vision for the final product.

Locations

The location you choose for the interview is important and will contribute to the mood you wish to convey. Here are a few examples:

1. Office or classroom. Focus on subject's professional achievement. Don't be afraid to reposition room items on/off camera for cleaner backgrounds and better visual impact.
2. Outdoors. Capture the subject in front of campus landmarks, setting the scene and highlighting a connection with the University.
3. On location. Capture the subject in their working environment, like in a lab, to help establish their expertise and identify their speciality.

Interview styles

The shooting style you choose for the interview will help determine how the viewer engages with the final video. A few ideas include:

1. Interviewee looking directly into camera. This style makes the viewer feel as though they're being talked to directly. Used commonly for the delivery of instruction and informational.
2. Interviewee looking slightly off camera. Allows the viewer to more passively engage with the video. This style is very common, and appropriate for many types of interviews, including reporting and story telling.
3. Interviewer on camera with interviewee. If the interviewer can add something to the interview (credibility, personality, etc.), they may be included on camera. If two cameras are used, this will require they be synched and editing together during the post production phase.

It is important to also take special care to **consider whether or not the interviewer's audio will be heard** in the video (assuming they're not on camera). If not, the interviewee must carry the conversation and repeat each question in their answer.

3-Point lighting
This lighting style requires three light sources to produce flattering light patterns on the subject.

www.izzyvideo.com/three-point-lighting
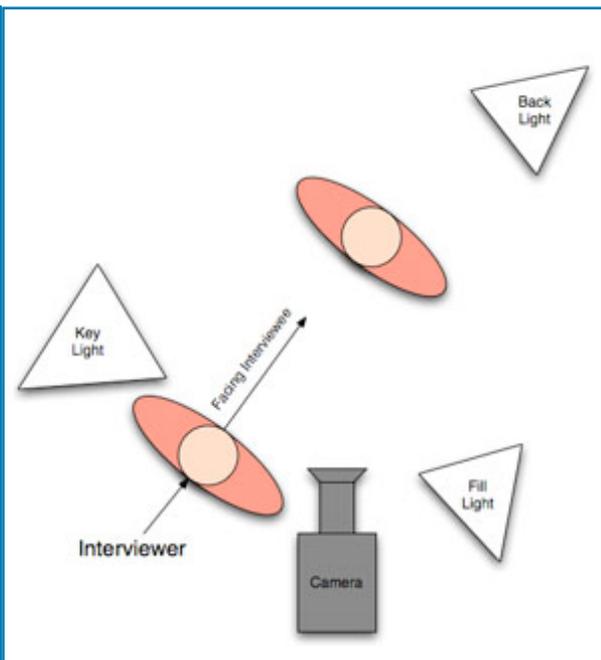
Lighting

The importance of good lighting is often overlooked by first-time videographers. This can lead to discolored, dark or grainy video. Many "prosumer" video cameras require extra light to produce a quality picture. Here are a few tips:

1. Avoid back-lighting. If the main light source is behind your subject, like a window, your subject will appear dark as the camera tries to balance the light in the scene. Reposition your subject so the light is coming from the front and slightly to to the side.
2. Add light to the scene when possible because typical room lighting is unflattering and dim. The Learning Technologies Group has a few lighting kits that you can check out.
3. Move the light source close to your subject for maximum diffusion (which seems counterintuitive, but is true).
4. Avoid raccoon eyes during outdoor shoots. This occurs when the sun is directly overhead, casting unflattering shadows down on the subject's face. Instead, try shooting in the shade, use a light reflector, or add artificial light to the front of your subject.

Audio

Poor audio is much more detrimental to the effectiveness of a video than poor picture quality. Therefore, it is very important to capture clean, balanced audio. Consider the following:

1. <u>Mind your surroundings</u>. Scout your location ahead of time, at the same time of day you'll be shooting. Listen for distracting ambient noises, and don't hesitate to pick a different, quieter location if needed.
2. <u>Use a better mic</u>. If your video camera has a built-in mic, it's probably not very good, and it may even pick-up noise from the lens cap hitting the camera! Whenever possible, connect an external mic for better sound capture. Lavalier mics are great for interviews, just be sure to attach it your subject in a place that doesn't rub against their clothes. If you need to be more mobile, attach a shotgun mic to the camera.
3. <u>Monitor your audio</u>. Always listen to your audio through a set of headphones during recording. This will allow you to identify and fix issues (too quiet, too loud, no audio at all) before it's too late!

Transparent technology
The best interviews happen when the interviewer and interviewee are comfortable. Run through a short practice round before rolling the camera. If you're prepared, you will not need to focus on the technology during the interview, and can instead focus on the dialogue.

Tips for setting the tone:
http://www.radiodiaries.org/ handbook4.html

Shooting

Just like locations set the scene and lighting sets the mood, placement of the camera relative to the subject and their surroundings is an important part of influencing the viewer's attention. Keep the following ideas in mind when shooting:

1. <u>Camera angle</u>. Place the camera at or near eye-level with your subject. This creates a fair and balanced feeling between the viewer and the subject. And if the interviewee is looking slightly off camera at the interviewer, make sure the interviewer's eyes are at the same level of the camera. Placing the camera above or below the subject changes the mood dramatically, insinuating dominance, or lack thereof. Creative camera angles can be used briefly for interest and effect, but are not common in standard interviews. (More info: **animatedbuzz.com/tutorials/camerangles.html**)
2. <u>Camera distance</u>. A good rule of thumb is to place the camera in the middle of its zoom range, and then move your camera to frame the subject accordingly. This allows you to zoom in/out during the interview. You want a comfortable distance between the camera and the subject, so they don't feel crowded. Likewise, you don't want to put the camera too far from your subject, because you may lessen the feeling of connection between the subject and the viewer. Camera distance may also be dictated by the type of mic you are using, and the amount of ambient noise in the scene. For example, if you are using a camera-mounted shotgun mic in a noisy environment, you'll want to place the subject closer to the camera, cutting out some of extra noise.
3. <u>Use a tripod</u> whenever possible. Even with the image stabilization features available on many cameras, it is very difficult to hand-hold a video camera, especially those that fit in the palm of your hand. Shaky camera work is a tell-tale sign of an inexperienced videographer! If you are shooting something in motion, tilt and rotate from your waist rather than with your arms, and don't be shy about bracing your arms against your body, or bracing your body against a stationary object for added stability.
4. <u>Framing</u>. Placement of your subject within the frame is crucial, because poor framing can distract the viewer's eyes. The *Rule of Thirds* is a great guide, which breaks the frame into a tic-tac-toe grid, and states that placing important elements along the lines or intersections of lines contributes to strong composition. For example, it is common to place your subject's eyes along the top horizontal line. Also, you should never cut off the top of your subjects head unless you are shooting a close-up. Standard interview shots include head-and-shoulders, and 3/4 length shots.
5. <u>B-roll</u>. Shoot extra video of the scene, the campus, or anything related to the interview topic. These extra shots can be included in the final video during the editing process to add interest, set the scene for the interview, and as cover for audio edits.

Post production and editing
The details of editing will not be covered in this workshop. Many who are new to the process use iMovie, and If you'd like to get started on your own, check out Apple's free tutorials:
www.apple.com/support/imovie

Workshop exercise

It's time to practice! During the remaining time in the workshop, you will be participating in the following exercise:
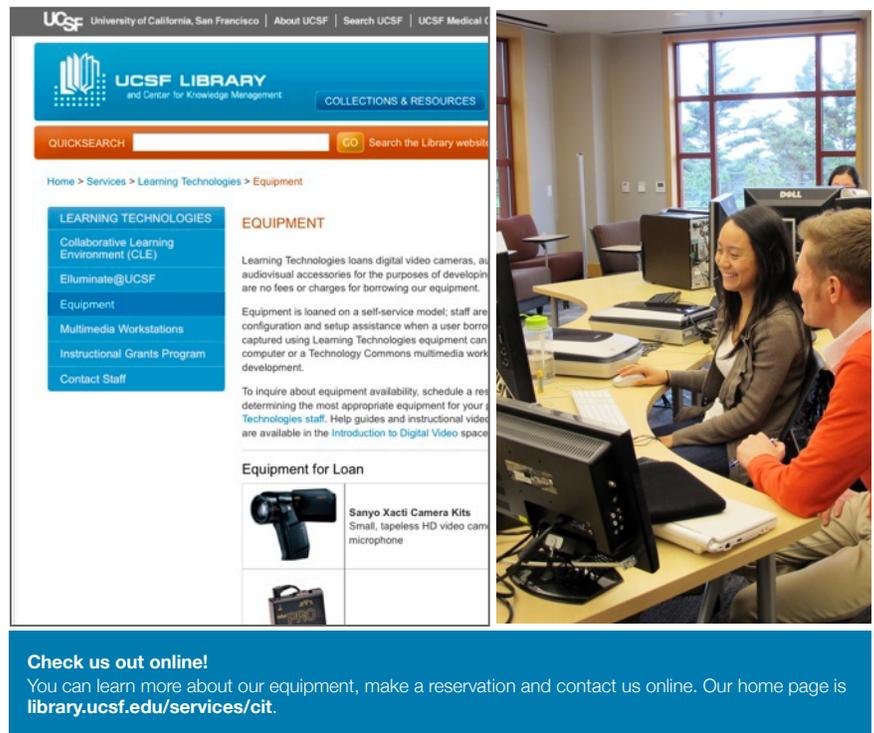
1. Break into groups of 3 or 4 people.

2. Assign roles. Each group member will be assigned a role, and these roles can be rotated through the group as time allows. Roles can include: interviewee, interviewer, videographer, audio engineer, lighting, and producer.

3. Choose an interview topic. The topic can be real or fictional, and try to have fun! You may be interviewing the latest UCSF Nobel Prize winner!

4. Choose a location and an interview style that supports the topic, and choose your equipment accordingly.

5. Capture a clip that sets the scene. For example, you could capture a clip showing off the campus, or showing your subject entering the scene.

6. Capture the interview. A minute or two is all that's necessary for this exercise. The dialogue should include an introduction, the interview, and a thank you or closing remarks.

7. If time allows, change roles and repeat.

8. Return to the classroom for review and critiques.

Equipment and help

The Learning Technologies Group provides multimedia equipment and guidance to UCSF faculty, staff and students.

- The LTG provides digital video cameras, lights and microphones for loan. For a list of the items that we offer, visit our equipment page: library.ucsf.edu/services/cit/equipment.

- In the Tech Commons area, CL-240 (Parnassus Library), we have a limited number of workstations equipped with multimedia capture, conversion and editing applications including QuickTime Pro, Audacity, iMovie, and Final Cut Pro: www.library.ucsf.edu/services/cit/workstations.

- Our normal hours of operation are M-F 8:30am-5pm. However, the Tech Commons area is open anytime the library is open. To enter after 5pm or on Sundays, use your ID card to unlock the door.

Check us out online!
You can learn more about our equipment, make a reservation and contact us online. Our home page is **library.ucsf.edu/services/cit**.

- To contact us with questions or to make an equipment reservation, fill out our contact form: www.library.ucsf.edu/services/cit/contact), or email us directly at CITsupport@ucsf.edu. You can also contact us by calling 415-476-9426.

Thank you for attending the workshop. Good luck!