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OIV: Tips on Recording with an iPhone 4s

https://vimeo.com/124776055

Overview

I created an original instructional video presentation to educate learners on how to record better footage using an iPhone. During the semester of my INTE 6710 creative design course at University of Colorado-Denver, I noticed my classmates struggled with getting the best video and audio footage from their webcams and smartphones. As someone who has worked in television production for almost 10 years, I've made it a priority to get the best footage possible with the production equipment available. I wanted to pass along my knowledge of production experience to an audience of instructional designers who wanted to improve the quality of their video-rich presentations.

After viewing this presentation, learners recognized how to best utilize their iPhone recording features to maximize the effectiveness of the video content in their instructional presentations. In addition, learners comprehended the importance of lighting, framing, subject positioning and natural audio. Plus, they realized how to augment the automated features (auto-focus, auto-exposure) of the iPhone.

I chose to target and audience of learners who owned smartphones but did not have extensive videography experience. As stated earlier, I focused on instructional designers who most likely did not have the similar skills, experience or equipment of those in the video production field. For full disclosure, I revealed that my instructions were based on operating an iPhone 4s, but discussed topics that theoretically applied to many smartphone cameras.

For this project, I recorded video with my iPhone, a GoPro camera and edited video and audio elements using iMovie. In terms of personnel, a fellow classmate, Jennifer Turvey, collaborated on the project as talent and videographer. In addition, members of Jennifer's family participated not only as talent but offered an interior space to record footage.

Design Decisions

Design Decision #1

I created simple instructions. Brief voice-over narration complimented clear video actions. Heath and Heath (2007) argued, "the more we reduce the information of an idea, the sticker it will be" (p. 46). The information did not overwhelm the viewer, an attribute Medina (2008) emphasized as important in the learning process.

Design Decision #2:

I included members of my classmate's family. The participation of Jennifer's nephews, Sam and Henry, created emotionally charged scenes. According to Medina (2008), emotionally charged scenes "persist much longer in our memories" (p. 80). In addition, the scenes with the boys created empathy with the viewer. Heath and Heath (2008) stated empathy as a key component to caring for an idea.

Design Decision #3:

I incorporated a variety of video transitions. Along with basic cuts, I utilized cross-dissolves, wipes, page curls and circular transitions of the iMovie software package. According to Reynolds (2014), changing the pace of a video presentation engages and re-engages the viewer's attention. Plus, the change in transitions created a sense of surprise, like an unexpected journey. As Heath and Heath (2008) commented, "we should seize the power of big surprises" (p. 69).

Design Decision #4

I recorded footage in different locations. According to Heath and Heath (2008), experimenting with new methods stimulates creativity. Shooting video indoors in the home and outdoors in the park gave the viewer various considerations to ponder when recording with a smartphone. In addition, shooting outdoors created a greater sense of depth, which Reynolds (2014) argued makes objects stand out.

Design Decision #5

I utilized the HD (High-Definition) recording features of the iPhone and the GoPro camera. Maximizing the visual potential made it easier for the

learner to notice the images. As Reynolds (2014) stated, "Make it big enough to see in the back row" (p. 140). In addition, the HD visual quality enabled the learner's brain to process the instructional information much easier. Medina (2008) argued the importance of vision as key sense in gathering information.

Formative Evaluation Response

Peer Review Question #1:

What are your thoughts about including Jennifer's nephews in the presentation as an emotional element?

Peer Reviewer A: I think it adds a connection via a family element but also shows an age range that this topic can be appreciated and utilized.

Peer Reviewer B: The nephews and the dog added emotional appeal and made the video more engaging! Good choice.

Peer Reviewer C: Since they were detached from the scene, their presence did not create any emotional element in me. The only emotional element was the clips about audio, which showed the different background noises. The visuals made it relevant to me.

Considerations: Incorporating the nephews in the presentation did create an emotional attachment with the audience.

Peer Review Question #2:

How would you describe the effectiveness of the variety of visual transitions over the course of the presentation?

Peer Reviewer A: I liked the transitions as you were backing them up with the mechanics of the camera such as the part about the iris and zooming in and out.

Peer Reviewer B: All the transitions worked for me and helped the video flow. I particularly liked the one after the Gorilla tripod and would have liked to have seen it more.

Peer Reviewer C: Transitions were smooth. They didn't surprise me but they provided enough visual stimulation.

Considerations: Overall, the majority of the transitions facilitated the storytelling of the presentation. I did not make any changes to the initial transitions.

Peer Review Question #3

Please describe the tone of the music in one word.

Peer Reviewer A: Upbeat

Peer Reviewer B: Upbeat

Peer Reviewer C: Chipper

Considerations: The purpose of this question was to gage the qualitative attribute of the music to determine if it was positive or negative. The results proved to be positive, which was the initial intention.

Peer Review Question #4

What key video concepts did you understand that you had difficulty before watching this presentation? What concepts did you not understand?

Peer Reviewer A: I am a novice with camera phones so I took it all in. I did not experience any difficulty with content.

Peer Reviewer B: I was happy to learn about holding the focus where you want it, reviewing the audio with ear buds and how the iris responds to light. All of the concepts were clear after your presentation. Wished I had seen this before I went out to shoot with my iPad!

Peer Reviewer C: I didn't understand any of the concepts you were talking about. I have had an iPhone since it was 3G.

Considerations: Overall, I felt most of the concepts explained were clear. If there was greater clarification from Peer Reviewer #3 about what he/she did not understand, I might have made some alterations.

Peer Review Question #5

Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the presentation? What suggestions/alterations might you recommend?

Peer Reviewer A: I had no problems with the script and the presentation. I am not sure but were you looking down and reading the script when you started to talk about audio elements when you were outdoors?

Peer Reviewer B: The information and presentation really worked. I was distracted by the volume fluctuation, especially when you first went outdoors. Sometimes the music overwhelmed the narration. Maybe try listening to the video without watching it and see what you think. I would recommend re-doing the two inside shots of you talking. If you hold your large print script to the immediate left or above the camera, it will appear as though you are talking to the camera. Would you want to add additional resources links as a last slide? Somewhere your now-interested viewers could go to learn more?

Peer Reviewer C: The visuals were very effective. The clips with the presenter were ineffective because you were reading a script instead of talking to the audience. Include text of the terms your talking about.

Considerations: Per the feedback of the reviewer, I re-recorded all my footage where I addressed the camera. I created copies of narration text and the copies were placed either under or to the side of the camera in order to read like a cue card. In an effort to guide the learner through the use of video, I opted not to include additional text.

Lessons Learned

Having a background in television production, many of the video production tasks did not pose a challenge, but I initially fell short on maintaining eye contact with the viewer while reading the narration text. Most importantly, I discovered the importance of collaborating as a team. Classmate Jennifer Turney and her family proved to be an invaluable part of the presentation.

References

Reynolds, G. (2014) *Presentation Zen design (second edition): A Simple visual approach to presenting in today's world.* Berkley, CA: New Riders.

Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2008). *Made to stick: Why some ideas die and others survive.* London, England: Random House.

Medina, John. (2008) *Brain Rules: 12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home and school.* Seattle, WA: Pear Press.

 "Candy" by Javier Suarez (Jahzzar) available on the Free Music Archive under CC BY license.