

VIDEO TIPS

JRN 380
spring 2010

Think moving photos

What is Web video?

- Clips vs. Packages
- Clips:
 - Quick turnaround
 - Complement to written story, not a replacement
 - Usually don't tell a complete story
 - Usually associated with breaking news
- Packages (what you are doing):
 - Longer turnaround
 - Could stand alone or be part of a larger multi-piece package
 - Tells a story
 - Sometimes incorporates photographs

Elements of Web video

- ❑ A-Roll – Interview.
- ❑ B-Roll – Almost anything that is not A-roll. Interesting visuals. You use this to cut back and forth to A-roll
- ❑ Voiceover – Your narrative driving the story. Much better to let your sources tell the story than using voiceover.
- ❑ Natural Sound – Sound from the environment you are shooting.

Types of videos

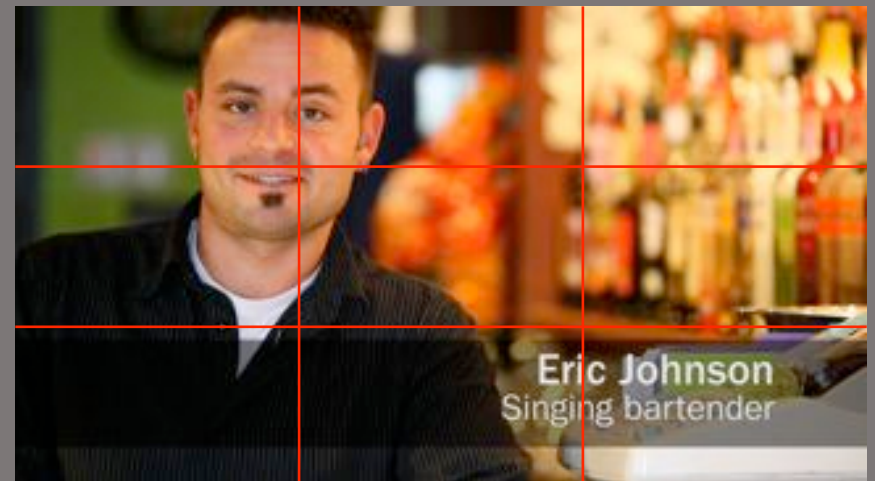
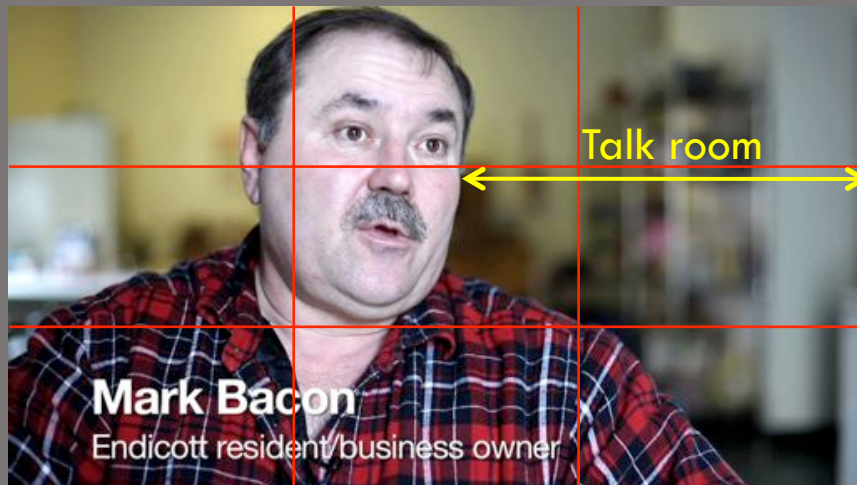
- ❑ Event: One-time or recurring event. You will only have one shot to capture the moment.
- ❑ Guide: “News you can use” – a how-to or informational video.
- ❑ Profile: Person, place, business, organization, etc.
- ❑ Slice of life: Sight and sound, less focus on a story.
- ❑ Package: Generally based around an issue or topic that the reporter seeks out sources and footage for.

Rules of thumb

- ❑ Keep videos to 2:30 or under. Viewers generally won't watch more than that. Three minutes, maximum is a good rule of thumb.
- ❑ Keep the videos interesting by changing the scenery. If a talking head is going on for more than 10 or 15 seconds, find some video to lay over the voice. Try to change images at least every 10 to 15 seconds. This is why shooting lots of B-roll is important.
- ❑ Don't use intros slides or long text slides. Just dive right into the material. Let the video do the talking.

Shooting: Framing good interviews

- As in photography, place the subject on a thirds point and not in the center.
 - Envision an imaginary 3x3 grid over your photo.
 - The background should include context for the story you are shooting. Not just an empty wall. If you are at a fair, the fair should be in the background.



Shooting: Framing good interviews

- ❑ Don't shoot the side of your subject's head. It's just strange.
- ❑ Leave some "Talk room" for your subject.
- ❑ Leave room for a lower third.
- ❑ Watch for objects sticking out of your subjects' head from the background. Think about "Polehead."



Shooting: Framing good interviews.



Backlight, focus, highlight issues. Lower third difficult to see. Reposition subject.



Focus is behind subject – not where you want it. Use manual focus

- ❑ Avoid backlight situations. Use your own light if you have to.
- ❑ Watch the placement of your lower thirds. A slight drop shadow helps sometimes to make them stand out.
- ❑ Use manual focus for interviews, or the camera may shift focus during the interview if the subject moves.
- ❑ Watch for your microphone in the shot!



Lower third cuts off her mouth.



The mic gets in the shot.

Shooting: Don't blow highlights

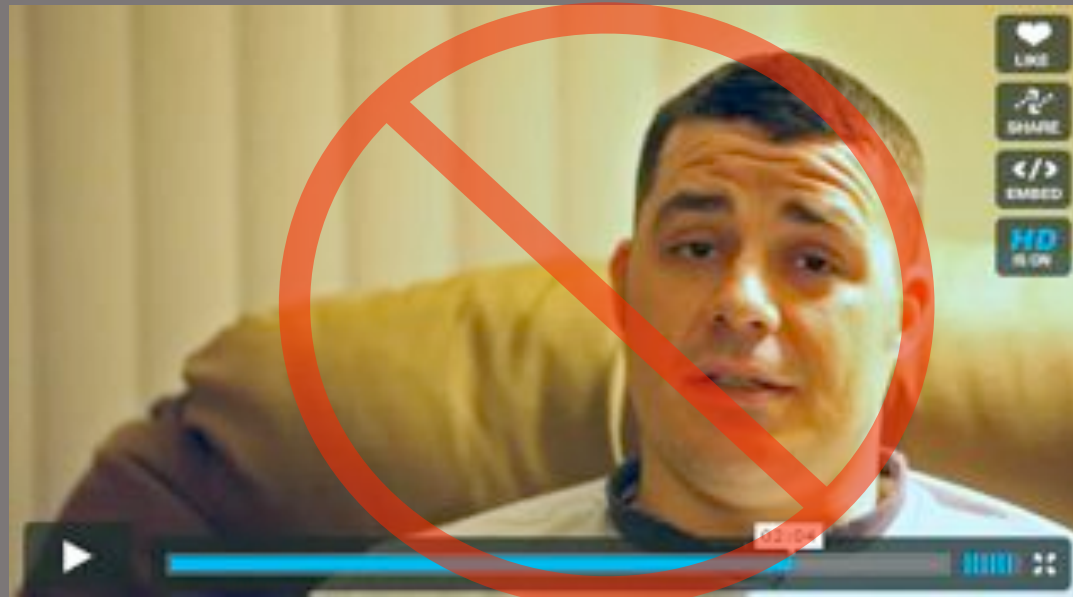
- ❑ Blown highlights are big white spots in your video. Avoid these as best you can.



- ❑ Use exposure compensation to get the proper exposure
- ❑ On a more expensive camera, you can use iris, shutter speed, gain, or ND filter controls
- ❑ Some cameras have “zebra stripes” that show blown highlights
- ❑ Frame your shot with without the blown highlight if all else fails

Shooting: White balance

- Sometimes your screen will show a color cast
 - Adjust the white balance for your scene.
 - Common settings are daylight and indoor settings.
 - Some cameras have more.
 - You can also set your own.



Shooting: Wide, medium, tight

W
i
d
e



M
e
d
i
u
m



T
i
g
h
t



- ❑ Shoot a variety of shots that are wide, medium and tight.
- ❑ More medium and tight shots will help. Wides are more of a “scene-setter.”
- ❑ Shoot details. Shoot anything interesting. Shoot visually interesting people and things.

Shooting: Interesting angles



- Give the viewer something they wouldn't ordinarily see. Don't just shoot everything at eye level – put the camera on the ground, stand on a chair. Crawl in the dirt. Hang the camera out of a moving car.

Shooting: Interesting angles



- ❑ Pretend you are one of the objects in your shot, and get something from its point of view.
- ❑ Access the inaccessible. Get places others can't or won't go. [Tape your camera to things \(www.vimeo.com/5145618\)](http://www.vimeo.com/5145618).

Shooting: Framing shots

- Use objects in the environment to frame your shots. Shoot through things. Make them part of your visual story.



Shooting: The devil is in the details

- Don't forget details. They make good B-roll and cutaways.



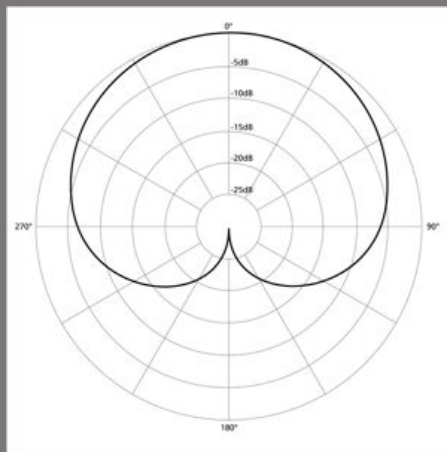
Shooting: Panning and zooming

- ❑ It's better to frame up your shot and let the action happen within the frame.
- ❑ If you do pan or zoom, make sure it has a real purpose. Most times it doesn't.
- ❑ If you're in the middle of an interview and the subject points to something, DON'T move the camera to it. Let the subject finish their interview and then take a shot of the object afterwards. You can cut them together in the editing process.

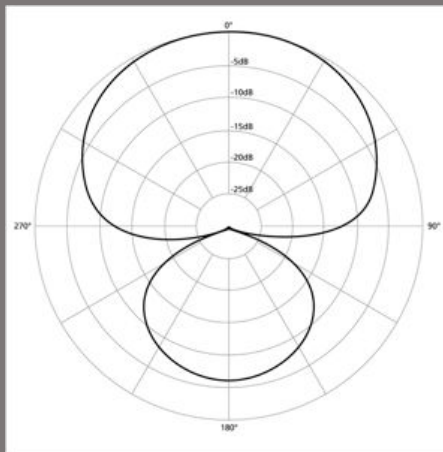
Shooting: Sound advice

- Types of microphones:
 - Omnidirectional: Collects sounds from all directions equally. Not commonly used for journalism.
 - Unidirectional: Sound collection is biased in one direction, usually the front.

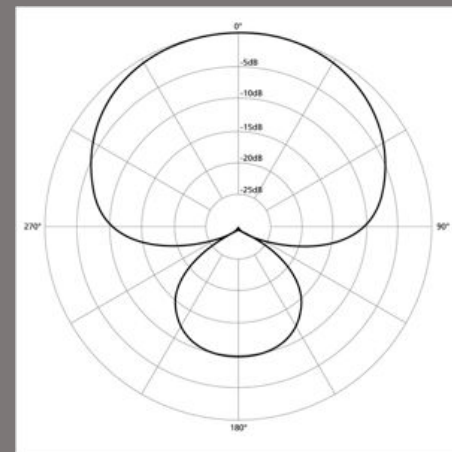
■ Cardioid,



Hypercardioid,



Supercardioid



Shooting: Sound advice

- Shotgun microphones
 - Most commonly used microphone for natural sound gathering.
 - Can be used in a pinch for interviews, but you have to be close.
 - Supercardioid design – heavily biased to collect sound directly in front of you.
 - Plugs into camera’s “hot shoe” usually.
 - Don’t forget to turn it on!



Shooting: Sound advice

- Lavalier microphones
 - Also called “tie-tacs” or lapel mics.
 - Best mic for interviews. Clip to shirts, ties, etc.
 - Make sure you run the wire underneath clothing. It looks strange to have a wire growing out of someone.



Hide the wires for the mic!



Shooting: Sound advice

- Stick microphones
 - Good for interviews where you don't have time to mic up subject. Make sure you are holding it close and pointed at them.
 - Generally a cardioid design – collects sound with a bias to what's in front of it.
 - Especially wirelessly, can be placed in a discreet location to pick up natural sound.



Shooting: Sound advice

- ❑ Only ONE place to plug in your microphone on the small cameras.
 - ❑ Just below the lens, you'll see something labeled "MIC."
 - ❑ Pull off the plate and plug the microphone in. Make sure it is turned **on**.
 - ❑ Many ports on the camera are the same size. Don't get confused.



Shooting: Sound advice

- ❑ Should you use music in your videos?
 - ❑ Two schools of thought.
 - ❑ Use music sparingly, or not at all in most cases.
 - ❑ Poynter has a good article and demonstration:
 - Article: http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=160187
 - Demonstration: http://www.poynter.org/content/content_view.asp?id=160295
- ❑ Some royalty free sites: Read the contract carefully before using!
 - ❑ www.freeplaymusic.com
 - ❑ www.incompetech.com

Shooting: General advice

- ❑ Use a tripod. No matter how steady you think your hands are a tripod is always steadier.
- ❑ Have someone spell their name and say it for you on camera. This way, you'll have it. This will also give the camera time to steady itself on the tripod. Write down the name, too, just in case.
- ❑ Zoom with your feet. It's harder to hold the camera steady when you're zoomed in with the optical zoom

Shooting: General advice

- ❑ Don't use the digital zoom, if you're using a camera that has it. It will pixelate your image.
- ❑ When focusing on a particular subject, use the auto-zoom first to set up the shot, then switch it to manual so that the camera won't try to focus on something else by accident if your subject moves out of the center of the frame.
- ❑ Hold your shots on interesting things. Don't zip past them, because you'll need more than just a few seconds for the finished video.

Shooting: General advice

- ❑ Try to avoid taking still photos at the same time you're shooting video. The microphones are very sensitive and can pick up the sound of a camera shutter. In one case, I've even had a wireless microphone pick up a reporter's scribbling in their notebook.
- ❑ Turn off your cell phone!
- ❑ Shoot multiple shots of the same thing, so you have more to choose from when you are editing. This doesn't, however, mean staging a scene.
- ❑ Wear headphones to monitor your audio.

Shooting: General advice

- ❑ If you must do standup (which is never – for us, anyway) Do a standup from the scene. Even if you don't use the standup, at least you can use the audio track for a voiceover. And if you do end up needing the standup, it's there.
- ❑ Think B-roll. Look at your surroundings and film anything that might be remotely interesting. You'll need this later so that you can cut to a variety of things to keep the video interesting. For instance, if you're interviewing a teenager and they say they buy a lot of video games, you can cut to a shot of a store display of video games instead of having a talking head on the screen for a long time.

Shooting: General advice

- ❑ Hold shots that you think might make good B-roll for at least 10 seconds, so you have enough video to use. If you move the camera at all during the 10 seconds, reset the clock. Otherwise you'll have movement during your shoot, and it won't work.
- ❑ Ask questions that get subjects to answer in full sentences. It looks better to have complete thoughts on film, rather than fragments.
- ❑ Don't interrupt your sources in mid-thought. Don't uh-huh or anything that the microphone can pick up. Pause for a second after a subject is done talking before asking your next question. This will make editing much easier.

Editing: Avoid jump cuts

- Jump cuts
 - ▣ If you cut an interview or a scene and then immediately use another clip from the same scene, you'll get something that looks like this.
 - ▣ Instead, use cutaways, go to a detail, focus on the person's hands, etc., then come back to the original clip.



Editing: Don't cross the axis

- Don't suddenly jump from one side to the other with your cuts. Envision an imaginary line and stay to one side of it in your edit.



- Make sure, however, that you shoot from every angle. This is just something to remember during editing.



Photo credits: Media College

Editing: Matched action

- When you cut from one clip to another, action should be in sync with each other.
- If you don't have matched action, use a cutaway.
- Works best with actions that are repeated.



Note the position of the hands from one frame to the next. They are in the same spot. It's not an accident.

Editing: Avoid text slides

- ❑ Text slides take the viewer out of the action.
- ❑ Too many can get tiring to read.
- ❑ On the Web, screen has potential to be very small, rendering text slides useless.
- ❑ If you must use a text slide, keep it short, simple and to the point.

Editing: Dissolves and transitions

- Use dissolves sparingly.
 - Works well when transitioning from a photo to a video segment or vice versa.
 - Photo to photo it works as well.
 - Video to video is best usually left with hard cuts.



Editing: Sound levels

- Make sure the levels of your audio are even throughout the piece. Bring audio up and down where you have to.



Aim to have your audio peaks at about the -6 marker. You don't want it to blow out.

Editing: Credit where credit is due

- ❑ Don't forget to add your credit at the end of the video. You never know where it will end up.
- ❑ Credit the song and its producer as well.
- ❑ Credit any photos or other multimedia that is not yours.
- ❑ If you have one, it's smart to include a link to your Web site as well.
- ❑ Creating a standing credit slide for yourself will give your videos a consistent look.