

CTAHR VIDEO PRODUCTION FACILITY - VIDEO PRODUCTION PROCEDURES

Foreword

As one of the major missions of CTAHR's Cooperative Extension Service is to disseminate information generated by researchers to its' clientele, video productions can be a highly effective tool in achievement of this goal. It effectively combines graphic and visual illustrations with oral information with potentially great impact on the viewing audience.

However, it takes a lot of time and effort to produce programs that will reach these goals. It is not as simple as putting a camera on one's shoulders, pointing, shooting and producing an effective videotape program. The entire production process is complex and each stage demands careful preparation and utmost attention in order to achieve maximum impact potential.

The **project requestor usually assumes the role of the Producer** - the person who gathers the resources and coordinates the activities required for production. **The requestor is also the content expert, responsible for the content or the information which needs to be output.** The Facility's personnel are media specialists whose responsibility lies with how the information is presented by the video production.

A Director, Scriptwriter or Narrator may be hired additionally to facilitate the production if required. All of these roles may be shared to differing degrees depending on the project requirements, skills of the participants or as a necessity of the production parameters.

Preproduction

Preproduction is the first step - a critical process that is one of the most important elements to assure success in production. Basic decisions of the production approach are made and planning is initiated. One needs to have an idea of where one wants to get to in order to figure out how to get there.

Initial call received

- consultation with video specialist re: production project proposal

First step would be to contact the video production specialist to talk about the video production project proposal. It is important to initiate communication with production specialists early on. This is especially critical on large, complex productions where funding is required or prior to grant proposal submission. You should be prepared with a basic idea of what you have in mind. At this point we may be able to figure out (or decide) if project is even a possibility within time frame and other currently available resources. Specialist will be able to help clarify project, production possibilities, estimated cost.

Treatment draft preparation

- brief description of program idea with purpose/objective defined

- target audience identification, importance to target audience
- program conceptualization/format decision
- production approach
- time frame (priorities, deadline, commitments)
- funding availability
- other relevant information developed

A treatment is prepared with the assistance of video specialist. A treatment is usually a one page outline of the project detailing information such as listed above.

Project acceptance and authorization through proper channels

All projects need initial approval by video specialist

- time scheduling
- priorities
- production complexity

Less complex projects, treatment submitted.

PIO Director approval

More complicated video production, treatment submitted.

PIO Director approval and decision re: Administrative approval

Very complex, long range, intensive projects, treatment submitted with PIO approval.

PIO Director approval

Administrative approval

After the treatment preparation, all necessary approvals must be obtained. Project approval by the video production specialist is initially required as time and other resources may simply not be available to proceed.

The work request, treatment and other appropriate information is channeled through the PIO Director's office for approval. Conference of parties may be required to discuss and clarify project parameters.

As the complexity of the project increases and extended resources of time, funding or manpower are required, further administrative approvals may be necessary.

Additional personnel (if required) i.e. narrator, writer, producer, director, on screen talent

- position description
- selection

Decisions on additional personnel requirements need to be made. Professional narration may be considered, if project proposers are unwilling or unable to

do so. Further assistance of a writer, director, producer or combination thereof, may be required to assure that productions are completed by deadlines. Available funding must be procured, authorization for hiring obtained, candidates interviewed and selected.

Topic area research

- content expert supplies material/information plus additional information (if required)

The content expert supplies a clear idea of the information they want to communicate/ disseminate. They also provide the video specialist with any additional information background on the topic area that may be required. If this is still insufficient, video specialist researches topic further to develop a better idea of scripting, visuals, etc. which might be needed.

Script development

- may start with a preproduction script that develops into a postproduction final script

- may require re-writes, back and forth between content/media specialist
- may require re-writes if unable to get illustrative footage or other reasons

The content expert, with the assistance of the video production specialist (or writer and director if required), develops what information needs to get across. Scripting may range in complexity - from very rough to highly detailed, depending on the project. Basic scripting includes development of a 2 column script which lists audio in one column and matching video (or other visuals) side by side in the 2nd column. Or it could start with just a rough sketch of what needs to be done with later development of a 2 column script as shots are taken and the "story" develops.

NOTE: Up for consideration is development of a contract between CTAHR Video and the project requestor. This step may be taken to facilitate swifter interface required to keep the project moving forward on schedule.

Project management and scheduling

- planning/logistics
 - shot list preparation
- on screen talent preparation
- location scouting/selection
- location host preparation
- production dates/time line development
- travel arrangements
- air/car/room reservations

These areas seem somewhat self explanatory - however, it's important to be realistic about attainable goals. These are definite considerations to always keep in mind so that the production proceeds smoothly.

A shot list may be required to assure that essential footage is acquired. In addition to basic visual requirements, keep in mind the need for cutaways (shots which provide additional detail which can serve as bridges between cuts) and transitions between program segments.

On screen talent or interviewees should be made aware of the videotaping process and what will be required of them. Make-up and appropriate clothing should be discussed prior to the shoot. Be advised that videotaping takes time - rehearsals or retakes may be required and equipment breakdown/setups from spot to spot are also time consuming .

Location scouting before the shoot may indicate factors such as lighting or extraneous audio that will affect videotaping or acquaint the cameraperson with desired angles or shots beforehand. Advanced knowledge of the taping situation may be invaluable if a special piece of equipment or prop is required. Power sources need to be determined especially if lighting is required.

Location hosts also need to be advised of production requirements of time or other needs such as environment changes (set design, furniture moves, undesirable audio elements etc.) and approval obtained for them. Efforts should be made to harmonize with normal procedures of the location host to minimize disruptions.

Production scheduling needs to be interfaced with ongoing and future production projects. Dates, times and events to be videotaped as well as how, why and where need to be projected and listed. Certainly, at times some of them may need to be developed at points further along in the process.

A time line helps to keep the productions on track. Remember, a delay on one project may mean a delay on another and on and on in a domino effect that hampers others' productions.

Travel arrangements are usually made by the video production specialist since they will have to deal with equipment shipment and care. Account numbers should be provided for expenses and travel completion or other paperwork originated from the PIO end.

Production

Equipment required

Equipment required for a videotaping session is packed for transportation to the location. If Facility personnel have not scouted the location, the cameraperson should have been made aware of special equipment needs such as a teleprompter, additional extension cords, fishpole and boom mike etc. Equipment has to be prepared and carefully packed for transportation especially if air travel is required.

On location

- location prep/set design/props
- equipment set up/breakdown [camera, audio, lighting (if required)]

Taping locations may require set up - actual taping locations with desirable backgrounds need to be selected. The set may need to be "dressed" by moving furniture, arranging props, or eliminating distractions etc. Shot angles and sizes need to be determined and action to be blocked out. Camera, audio and lighting equipment, their cables as well as power lines need to be set up and gaffed down. Equipment should be tested prior to the shot. Also - be aware that equipment needs to be repacked for transportation whenever moving from one location to another. All of this takes a lot of time especially when there are no grips (production assistants) on site.

Videotaping

- rehearsal and retakes
- shot list
- additional visuals (slides, pictures etc.)

On screen talent should have a clear idea of what information they need to impart and how to do so - especially if there is no script previously prepared. Again - be aware that rehearsals, retakes, varying shot sizes or angles may be required and that these will increase time expenditures.

If a shot list has not been prepared, the producer or director should have a clear view of what visuals need to be acquired and to communicate these needs to the camera person. In turn - the camera person should communicate when shots have or have not been acquired.

In addition to videotaping live action, slides or other visual materials can be incorporated into the production. These need to be obtained by the producer and passed on to the camera person for videotaping or digitizing.

Note: During videotaping, please minimize conversations, extraneous audio or other distractions. Even when conversation is not being recorded ambient audio may be needed.

Narration recording

After the narrator has been selected, a recording date, time and place must be arranged. Of course, a final production script will be necessary at this point. Again the content expert is responsible for the information to be imparted while the media specialist can assist with presentation. Narration style, pacing and correct enunciation are other concerns to be aware of.

Post production

Footage review

- raw footage dubs
- logging footage
- transcriptions

After completion of actual production, it may be advisable to make copies to save wear and tear on the raw footage tapes during post production steps. Tapes of lesser quality may be used here.

All footage needs to be reviewed and logged - the visuals are listed by tape, time and shot size. Indications of shot quality (good shot, bad take etc.) may be noted at this time and an edit decision list (of desirable footage) formulated. This aspect is usually performed by Facility personnel although producers may be interested in reviewing the footage also.

Verbal transcriptions may also be required for certain productions. Though extremely time consuming, transcripts provide accurate records for final scripting and precise edit points for editing.

Final scripting

- scripting
- edit decision list
- music/audio effects selection
- graphics preparation
- credit listings

The content expert and media specialist may join efforts to develop the final scripting at this point. Transcripts, logs and the edit decision lists are utilized to provide the script the editor will utilize to produce the program.

Music selections need to be made for inclusion into the final script. If copyrighted material is used clearance must be obtained by the producer. The Facility has a library of copyright cleared music and sound effects which may be used. Audio effects may be required and need to be obtained if unavailable at the Facility.

A list of graphic requirements must be provided by the content expert. A list of names, titles or other information (correct spellings confirmed please!) should be provided by the content expert as well as necessary phone numbers, addresses etc. which need to be displayed. Graphs, tables or charts may need to be videotaped or generated on the Facility's AVID edit system or using other programs such as Photoshop. Graphics preparation does take a bit of time so please be prepared to submit this list as soon as possible.

Although the credit list falls under graphics preparation, separate mention is made to call attention to the addition of sponsors or other contributors and special acknowledgments or disclaimers which need to be listed in the credits. The producer should provide this information for inclusion.

Video editing

With the raw footage, music and audio effects, prepared graphics and final scripting in hand, everything gets put together during the actual editing process. It is tedious and complete concentration is required to accomplish this final postproduction stage...which is naturally the media specialist's responsibility. One projected estimation is one hour of work for a minute of edited material. Although not all programs require this level of precision, and others need much more, it's suffice to indicate that the process is consuming. Therefore, this part of the process is usually left to the care of the media specialist who confers with the content expert at critical junctures.

Final edit masters remain in the custody of the CTAHR Video Production Facility. A copy will be provided to the program producer.

Duplications

The Facility will provide a limited amount of duplications of a completed production. For larger amounts, duplication should be contracted to private firms. The edit master will be provided for this purpose. Once duplication is completed the edit master must be promptly returned to the CTAHR Video Production Facility for safekeeping.

Dissemination

Initially, project requestors will be responsible for dissemination of completed productions although CTAHR Video will assist when necessary. Relevant productions should be provided to Cooperative Extension Service offices throughout the State. Productions may also be broadcast as part of The CTAHR Show.

Marketing and Sales

We are able to assist with packaging concepts, cover or label design and creation with the assistance of others in the Publications and Information Office. Packaging sleeves along with hard cases much improve the marketability of a video production.

We have started selling video productions as part of a cost recovery program. Our usual cost is \$15 per tape plus \$3 for shipping and handling costs. This money goes into the PIO RCUH revolving fund.