

MCP WORKSHOP: **Video Making**

When buying a video camera:

- 3CCD is best.
- Manual focus and night vision are good to have too. Get a bigger battery off e-bay. (or otherwise) You'll need it.
- If you buy one second hand, take a tape into the shop to test that it records. maybe take your laptop too to make sure you can transfer off it. Make sure the camera comes with a power supply, that you will need.
- Buy a wide angle or super wide angle lens off e-bay. They rock.

- It should be a mini DV camcorder. DV CAM and other bigger formats are more expensive. VHS is no good. (Too old) HI 8 is no good. (Never caught on.)
- If in doubt go for the 3CCD one, otherwise go for the one with the biggest lens. It'll let more light in and give a higher picture quality.
- You won't get a second hand HD camera for a while yet.

- Some cameras will be PAL, some NTSC, doesn't matter too much. Except tapes recorded in NTSC won't be able to be ripped with PAL cameras. (sometimes at least, I have found this, generally at the worst possible moment.)For making internet videos or DVD's this won't matter. editing software will convert between the two.

Cables:

- You'll hopefully have some. Most laptops have a DV port. (as will all cameras) Most macs will have a FIREWIRE port, and obviously USB 2.
- USB 2 should be your last option.
- Firewire and the DV port are faster.
- You may need to buy extra cables if you buy second hand. They're expensive.

Tape Types:

- mini DV!
- It should be a mini DV camcorder. DV CAM and other bigger formats are more expensive. VHS is no good. (Too old) HI 8 is no good. (Never caught on.)

Transferring to computer:

- Plug the camera into the computer, turn it to 'play' 'vhs' or the ripping mode or the viewing of

previous footage mode and the computer should recognise it. Preferably, ignore everything windows does at this point and load up your editing software and rip it using that. You might have a camcorder that burns immediately to DVD, I don't know much about them, hopefully it burns a data DVD, otherwise you'll have to figure out ripping footage off DVD's.

- Premier will rip the footage at FULL DV quality. This is like 10gb for an hour or something. Be prepared, you'll need a lot of space on your harddrive. You can probably change the options in premier but this is very useful. You'll need the full quality for burning the edited footage to DVD, or back to mini DV. If you know for SURE you'll absolutely never need the footage for anything other than the web, (and we're going to have web tv soon) rip it and encode it simultaneously. (Windows Movie Maker will by default rip and encode straight to WMV.)

Composing shots:

- **Fire:** make SURE you have ambient light, or that your fire is big enough to light you up sufficiently, (it won't be by the end of the burn) or use night mode.
- Use manual focus, fire will make the cameras auto focus go squidgy.
- (Sometimes not, better to test this out before you shoot something you want to look good.)
- Everybody has seen fire trails before, even anti-spin ones. Show up the person to show what they're doing. (or if it's a promo, what the costumes are like, how sexy they are etc...)
- There is a rule of photography that also applies to video composition called the rule of thirds. It's basically this: If the subject is off-centre (if you divide up the image into thirds, horizontally and vertically, then the intersection of the third lines...) then the image is more visually arresting than if the subject is centred.

ie:



Locations:

- We've all seen fire spinning in a field before. yeah really.
- Choose somewhere that looks super cool to spin in, and will reflect light from the fire onto the walls, back onto your subjects etc.
- Obviously you don't want the background to be too distracting from your subject, unless it's like, hey check me out! I'm spinning fire next to famous landmark X!

Editing:

Editing is where a lot of the art of video making comes in. (along with the composing.)

Not for promo editing: get your footage, watch it and cut out the broad chunks that you want. (or watch it on a camera and write down the bits you want, then only rip them.) You don't have to be accurate. Most good editing programs will allow you to mess around with the clips you make.

Get your music and get an idea of what your video is about, for example:

- I want to copy the style of this music video,
- I want to showcase each of these people in turn,
- I want to show the spin/event like it was, bad and good,
- I want to show off all my new tricks, but am slightly embarrassed so none of my style,
- I want to make a comedy video based on the premise of doing the same move in different locations and then cutting it all together.
- I want to make it in the style of my favourite film.

Or maybe you just want to show what you can do and make it really nicely edited to the music. Well then, you're going to have to listen to the music a lot.

Things you can do:

- match the speed of the spinning to the music and choose it for that reason.
- match the cuts in the footage to the beats of the music.
- match the 'energy' of the spinning to that of the music. (malamans video is a good example of matching energy to music and using cuts in time to the music and adding to the energy of the spinning.)

Programs:

windows: Adobe Premier (pro!) Sony Vegas. Final Cut Pro, Avid DV Express and so on. (Windows Movie Maker is NOT recommended) Adobe After Effects.

mac: Final Cut Pro (thou I think you can get Premier for mac as well)

linux: Kino, Lives, Cinelerra (Editing is much harder on linux, but still very possible. Try getting a custom linux distribution. Spherular Vision was all done on Linux.)

It can be useful to have vector graphics packages for titles, as well as Adobe Photoshop.

windows: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator. (also Coreldraw and others)

mac: Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator.

linux: The Gimp, Inkscape svg.

Hardware:

Lots of it! Video editing is tough work for a computer. It'll be slower and a bit harder with old

hardware. Go borrow your universities hardware, or if you can't find a geek and borrow theirs. (or find a student and use their account with the university.) most universities have some kind of audiovisual department. Alternatively, for the cash rich, you can hire equipment, and operators too, for money. Or sometimes you can convince local indie film-makers to help you out, or students for the 'experience'. (and maybe minimal payment too.)

Specific Advice for Making Promos:

If you're making a promo, consider what the client wants to see. If they just want to make sure you're competent, and safe and can perform a show, or if it's a captive audience, just show them the uncut show, with some sexy titles. If you're trying to sell your self to them, you should make sure your promo is SHORT. like 30 seconds to a minute, and filled with fast cuts and spectacular visuals. You want them to be gasping for more, so much so that they book you just to see what the video didn't show. First impressions count, but last impressions more so, so make sure you start and end with a bang. (as it were.) FlameOz's promo is a perfect example, brilliant visuals and leaves you wanting to see the 15 minute version.