Mobile Video DIY

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Our Project

- Researching how news and media outlets are using mobile content
- Creating video tutorials for citizen journalists
Mobile Video Research
Times are changing

- The average citizen has a high quality camera with them at all times.
  - 56% of US population had a smartphone last year (pew research)
  - 90% of 18-20 year olds
  - 22% of global pop. own smartphones (business insider)
  - The quality gets better with each update
Tons of media outlets feature mobile content
Sometimes it can look like this

http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1098303
Sometimes it can look like this

2013 YEAR IN REVIEW
Usually, it looks like this.

How do we know?

- Over the semester we became Mobile Journalism experts
  - We researched academic viewpoints on mobile journalism
  - We did in-depth research of how news sites are using it
  - We watched a ton of videos
Research goals

- Understand the current state of mobile journalism to tailor advice in the videos
- Identify competition
- Select the most effective topics for the DIY videos
Academic research

- Dr. Adrian Hadland’s categories
  - Director of Journalism at the University of Stirling, Ireland
- Professional mobile journalism
  - Professional journalists who tell mobile stories
- Citizen journalism
  - Civilians who manage to get material to major broadcasters*
- User generated content
  - Raw, unedited material caught by amateur eyewitnesses
Academic research

- Kate, Courtney and Jiaxi’s categories
  - Capstone students ready to graduate
- Professional mobile journalism
  - Professional journalists using mobile equipment to tell stories
- Citizen journalism
  - Civilians who are shooting video with the intention of creating journalism to send to a news agency
- User generated content
  - Raw, unedited material caught by amateur eyewitnesses without a journalistic motivation
  - Can be a form of audience engagement
Media outlet research

- List of 44 media companies to research
- Uniform questions
  - What kind of mobile journalism does it have?
  - How is it gathered?
  - Are there any tips or tutorials available?
  - What are the most popular topics?
  - How could it be improved?
Results

- What kind of mobile journalism does it have?
  - 21 of 44 were using citizen mobile content
    - User Generated Content: 12
    - Citizen Journalism: 12
    - Professional Mobile Journalists: 8
    - Photos: 8
Results cont...

- How is it gathered?
  - Web only: 2
  - App only: 4
  - Web and App: 8
  - Email: 5
  - SMS: 2
  - Social Media: 5
  - Uploaded from Youtube / Vimeo: 2
Problems with methods for gathering

- Some people were web only
  - Mobile content should be uploadable from an app
- Volume of submissions
  - Too many emails
  - Not enough organization of data
- No platform to submit
  - How would people know to send something in?
Results cont...

- Are there any tips or tutorials available?
  - Written instructions: 3
  - Blogs / Producer help: 2
  - Video tutorials: 1
  - App: 1 (Storymaker - SmallWorldNews)
Tutorial Examples

- Australian Broadcasting Company- ABC Open
- Guardian Witness
- Associated Press
Shoot better video

It can be tricky to shoot a professional-looking video package, but the results are worth the effort. These simple techniques can help you take your video from shaky camera footage to an engaging storytelling.

Get plenty of material

When shooting video, the golden rule is: the more material, the better. You need to make sure to have plenty of, or alternate material, in order to add dimension and secondary storyline to a story. It also helps with editing and gives you more material to pick from.

Use the rule of thirds

The rule of thirds, or ‘golden cut’ is a compositional rule to help frame your scene in a more natural and engaging way. Since your TV or computer monitor is in landscape, you should evenly divide like a normal photo, and line subjects up a little off center. If your subject is already in the middle of a video, it will be wider and off. But if you use the rule of thirds, you anticipate the subjects’ movement and allow for some background information to be in the frame.

Use a tripod

Many reports are available at retailer stores for $15 to $50, and they can be a worthwhile investment. They’ll make your photos steady and sharp.

Hold your shot

If you hold your shot for at least a few seconds, even if it won’t need to be that long, you ensure that you get plenty of usable material.

Always consider the lighting

Natural light is always better, and always use daylight whenever possible. Avoid fluorescent lighting - it’s hard. And don’t be afraid to move the shot - if you’re in a poorly lit situation, ask your subjects to move outdoors or up a better光源.

Don’t forget the sound

If you don’t have audio with your video, your viewers are missing a huge part of the story. The more natural, or detailed, the better. Try repeating your name at the end for a few minutes to absorb some natural sound at the event you’re covering. Whether it’s a concert or a protest. You can use this as a backup for background sound if you’re running this.

Avoid pans, zooms, and dissolves

You may feel like getting clever with some of your shots, but every video expert we talked to said video clips are more effective when they’re static. The shots need to be in one shot, without movement. The exception to this is when it’s a dissolve. Dissolves will give you that you weren’t enough footage to make the story work. Best shots make a video look cleaner and more professional. And, in time, it usually transitions between shots (whether you have those that exist in the raw video file).

Bring an extra battery

Don’t get caught with a dead camera in the middle of a great story. Batteries run out more quickly than you think even when you’re filming a lot of material. Other things to keep in your bag: media tapes, a notebook and pen (people, for getting name spellings and contact info), and maybe something to eat (just in case).

Learn more

Don’t forget the CNN tips to

Two veterans CNN cameramen explain how to shore up your video way.

Tips for video storytelling

Video stories can last the viewer inside the action like nothing else. Learn how to craft your visual story from CNN video producers.

Editing video like a pro

It can be overwhelming when you try to turn all that video footage into a cohesive story. These tips will help you keep your video editing smart, functional and compelling.
What are the most popular topics?
- Being uploaded?
  - Pets, nature photos, extreme weather videos, holiday
- Being asked for?
  - Pets, nature photos, extreme weather videos, holiday
  - Specific features, ongoing international news, breaking news in general, civil unrest
Al Jazeera

**PROS**

- Pure journalism
  - Serious content topics
  - Serving the public - advancing civil liberties
- Good interface
- High level of participation

**CONS**

- Has a limited geographic scope
- We couldn’t understand it
  - Google translate
Guardian Witness

PROS
- Design is aesthetically pleasing, easy to use
- Uploading is easy - online and app
- Assignments with deadlines

CONS
- Submission button is hidden
- Majority of topics are silly
- Ask for still photos - not emphasizing video
- App crashes
CNN iReport

**PROS**
- Assignment desk
  - News beats
  - Very focused stories
- Easy to upload
- Focus on video
- Simple and organized
- Rating system = less work for CNN (interns)

**CONS**
- iReport is hidden within the app
- Should be a separate app
- The website is only functional, not pretty
PROS
● Assignment desk
● Current assignments are newsworthy

CONS
● Most people submit photos or blog type answers
● Submitted by email
● Final product - basically a blog
Fox uReport

PROS
● Platform for uploading
● Lots of videos
● Site is organized

CONS
● Terrible assignments
● Featuring pet videos
● Ads on UGC
News Agencies

What they’re doing:
● Using citizen journalism for audience engagement

What they could be doing:
● Using citizen journalists as their private army
Citizen Journalists

What they’re doing:
● Using these sites for social networking

What they could be doing:
● Giving attention to things they care about
The problem - news outlets

- News outlets aren’t taking full advantage of this opportunity
  - Organizational problems
  - Topics are ineffective
  - News orgs aren’t offering effective tips
The problem for citizen journalists

- Citizen journalists aren’t creating useful video
  - Professional Journalists and User Generated Content are getting what they want
  - Citizen journalists fall through the gap
Part 2: DIY Videos
Our project

● We created do-it-yourself video tutorials for citizen journalists.
  ○ The videos will show people how to cover specific situations.
  ○ These are not your average, technical iPhone tutorials.
● They will be showcased on the RJI website, and will be part of the MobileVideo DIY app.
Work Flow

- Research
- Choose topics
- Find and interview professionals
- Write and anchor scripts
- Find relevant b-roll
- Produce videos
  - With and without graphics
Tutorial video topics

- Natural disasters/extreme weather
- Protests, activism and unrest
- Features and Interview techniques
- Spot news
- Political coverage

- *Cat videos? … just kidding*
Interview Subjects

- We talked to professionals in the field about how best to cover the topics we chose.
- We found people through our faculty advisors Beth Pike and Mike Wheeler, and through previous experiences we had interning and reporting.
Aaron Mermelstein

- Writer/producer for the Higher Education Channel in St. Louis
- Freelance videographer for ABC, NBC and CBS
Laz Abalos

- Video Photographer at KMBC, Kansas City
- Produced Kansas City snowfall video entirely with iPhone.
Bev Chapman

- Former Anchor and Reporter at KMBC
Alex Fees

- Former television reporter and anchor at KSDK-TV, St. Louis
Geri Migielicz

- Lorry I. Lokey Visiting Professor in Professional Journalism at Stanford University, teaching multimedia in the Graduate Program in Journalism.
Shayla Harris

● Senior Video Producer at The New York Times
Jim Thomas

- Video photographer at KMOV-TV, St. Louis
Spot News
Protests / Activism
QUESTIONS?