

Flip Video Camera Training Documentation

Features

Lens and Microphone on front

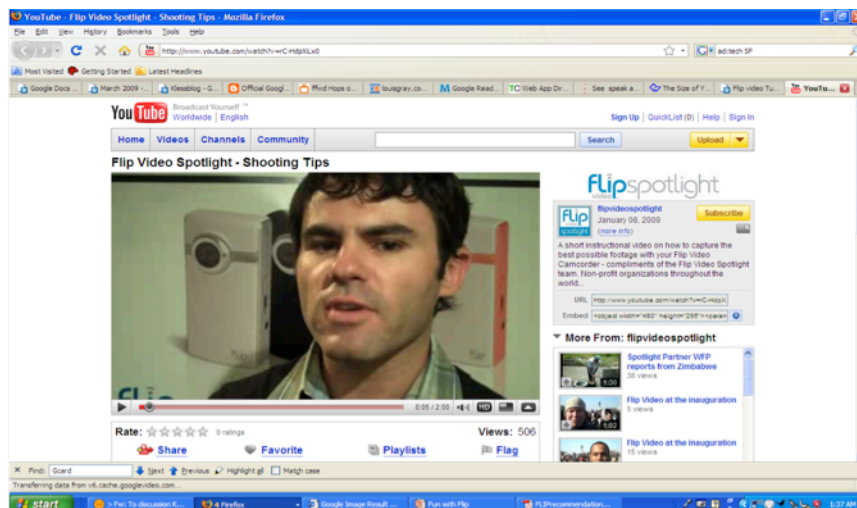


The Flip video camera comes with a soft bag for travel and a wrist strap. Use the wrist strap to prevent dropping the camera.

Recommendations for Shooting With Flip Video Camera

The following YouTube Video offers a lot of great tips about shooting video with the Flip Camera –

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC-HdpXiLx0>



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Shooting Distance From Your Subject

Hold camera 30" to 48" from subject so their head and shoulders fill the viewfinder. This will also improve audio quality. Shoot with the camera close to your eye level and face.

Avoid using zoom. Instead move the camera closer or further away to what you are shooting (zoom with your feet).



An example of a self-interview or reflective interview using a Flip camera.

Hold Your Camera Steady

If possible use a tripod or hold your camera with both hands and lean your elbows into your chest to help support the camera.



WRONG: too much negative space, Pan over, Tilt up



RIGHT: nice medium close up head/shoulders



Leave room at the lower third of the frame to insert title



Nice close up, with good centering and still room to insert title

When the subject is talking directly to camera in a news style delivery, it's the practice (but not the rule) to frame them in the middle of the screen and not off center. There should be even space around the left and right sides of the subject. You should also leave a little "head room" on top so you don't cut off the subjects head if they move. This helps balance your shot.

The subject can also be to one side of the frame to include or highlight background



For interviews the subject is also set to one side of the frame with plenty of "nose room"



Tell a Story Through a Variety of Shots

These are the three most important shots in video - Wide shots, Medium shots, and Close ups. You'll want to shoot a variety of these shots when composing your video to make your story more powerful and effective. You want to avoid just shooting an interview, as you'll want to have video footage ("B-roll") that you can display on screen to break up your interview. We provide an example of how this might work below.



Shooting where there is action behind the subject increases the interest of the composition and can enhance the story. Find a spot out of the way but in the subject's typical environment. Get details of the subject's routine, things they do every day that will illustrate their character, their core values, or both. When shooting this type of content, treat the video camera like you're taking a photograph. Hold the camera motionless on a scene for 10 seconds and let people/cars/objects move through it. If you want to follow or track motion, try to start or stop your movement with a still shot.

Shoot B-roll to illustrate detail and provide an overview of the scene. Get subjects to say/spell their names and titles so we can positively ID them later. When interviewing someone, ask some softball questions first to get your subject comfortable. Look for an entry to a deeper discussion. Try to get them to summarize their thoughts in a sentence or two. Remember in most cases your final edited video will be 2-3 minutes in length, so you want people to provide you with short, concise sentences. Have fun with the process and don't worry too much about getting it "right." Good content will compensate for technical difficulties (within reason).

Example Flip Video Story: Recording a Street Fair or Market

Say you are going to record your experience at a street fair or market. First you will want to take a moment to think visually about what story you want to tell and how you might want to construct it – what experiences or messages do you want to convey to viewers.

Next think about who you want to interview, whether it is putting the camera on yourself so you can describe your experience and what you want people to know about the location where you are shooting OR if you are interviewing friends, professors, people on the street, etc. Ask the person to say and spell their name, and where they are from (which you may also want them to spell). Toss them a few softball questions to break the ice, and then when the moment is right, ask your questions. If you don't like the answer ask the question again OR if there was a sudden loud noise, ask the question again. As you walk around the street fair or market, take a variety of b-roll video – close ups and medium shots of fruits and vegetables, merchandise in people's booths, close ups/medium shots of people's

faces, clothing, jewelry, cars, buildings, building features, people walking, plates of food, wide shots of the street, local landmarks, etc.

Try to shoot a variety of shots that you might be able to weave into your video interview so the viewer can get a sense of place and understand your story. Hold your camera on a single shot without movement for a minimum of 10 seconds before moving the camera or doing a panning shot (slowly moving camera from left to right or right to left) or tilting shot (slowly moving the camera from up to down or vice versa). An example of a panning shot might be holding your camera on a plate of food for 10 seconds and then slowly moving the camera to the left to show a crowded restaurant. An example of a tilting shot might be holding your camera for 10 seconds on a chef's busy hands as he or she prepares a meal and then slowly tilting the camera up to show a kitchen full of chefs or the face of the chef who prepared the meal.

****Important: Wait 4-5 seconds from when you hit the record button to when you start recording your interview or collecting B-roll. You want to avoid people getting cut off. Also allow 4-5 extra seconds at the end of your video before shutting off the camera to avoid cutting people off.**

Camera Audio

The Flip Camera's microphone is not great. You need to be close to your subject for them to be heard. Be aware of how much ambient noise there is around you as it may drown out the sound of the person you are interviewing. Sudden loud noises are worse than a steady hum of activity. If your interview audio is poor, then your video is not really usable for posting online, so pay close attention to your audio. If you are have a hard time hearing the person then Viewers need to hear and understand the person you are interviewing.

Workflow and Media Management

Your Flip video camera will record 1-2 hours of video, depending on which Flip model you've been provided. Your Flip camera takes 2 AA batteries, which will provide you with 1.5 to 2 hours of recording time (plan ahead and be sure to bring extra batteries with you so you can swap out your dead batteries with fresh ones).

Once you have filled up you Flip camera with video, you need to empty it by downloading the video to a computer.

To transfer the video to a computer, do the following:

1. Boot up your computer
2. Turn on your Flip and "flip" out the USB arm on the camera and insert it into the USB port on your computer. The camera acts similar to flash or thumb drive. When you mount the camera to your laptop's USB, the camera will appear as a hard drive. Find the video files on the camera (located in DCIM/100Video) and copy them off to a designated folder and label the files with where they were shot. It also doesn't hurt to include some notes in a Word or text file that you can store along with the video you upload to your computer.
3. After transferring video files to your drive, spot check them and make sure the transfer was successful. If so, remove videos from the Flip camera by dragging the video file contents of "100Video" folder to the trash (or recycle bin) and deleting them. Now you're ready to shoot more video.

What Kind of Flip Video Shots Don't Work

Make sure the video you shoot with your Flip has a purpose or meaning. Quite often when we provide Flip cameras to students we get back silly conversations or sometimes even singing while students are

traveling by car or bus. Since the end viewer is not in the car or bus with you, they do not have a context of what is so funny and trying to catch each person on video who is talking may mean moving the camera around a lot, which can be disorienting to the people viewing your end video. Although you are free to shoot in a car or a bus, remember that the viewers of the video need to be provided context. In most cases, silly banter between trip participants just isn't good or usable video.

Ask Permission to Shoot (if the situation allows for it)

Be sensitive about the people you are filming. Sometimes it doesn't hurt to ask someone, "do you mind if I film you?" or "are you okay if I film you?" You also don't want to put yourself in a situation where you will upset a person or group of people for filming something that they prefer not to be filmed." Shooting video will also make you "look like a tourist," so always be aware of your safety and what is going on around you when shooting video.

Video Shooting Ideas

Feel free to work with each other when shooting your videos. If you feel it works better for you to hold the camera while interviewing a fellow student, then consider working in teams and include other students in the production of your videos. Get their perspective of what they are experiencing. Just make sure others are following the same video shooting guidelines outlined in this training guide.

1. Self-reflective or MTV "Real World" style video

Sometimes you may be too busy to shoot video interviews while you are traveling around. So consider capturing a variety of shots of "B-roll" video during your day (close ups, medium shots, and wide shots) as described in this training document – video that will illustrate your experience. Then maybe at the end of the day, you turn the camera on yourself (or have a friend help you) and talk about what you experienced during a given day or period of time. We can then weave in the B-roll you shot into your reflective interview to illustrate your experience. Just make sure that you choose a well-lit and quiet location to do your self-reflective video interview. You are the producer, so if you don't like something you said, just shoot the interview again until you are happy with it. If possible, use the tripod that is provided to you to hold the camera steady. Just make sure the camera is capturing you (maybe have a friend double check that you are in the video frame). Make sure the acoustics of room are right where you are filming, i.e., you aren't in a room where you are hearing lots of room echo. Hotel rooms (rooms with beds, curtains, couches, and other cloth furnishings) are a great location to do reflective style interviews as the sound in the room is absorbed by the furnishings. When doing self-reflective interviews try to avoid dates, days of the week, times, etc., as we may weave together video from multiple days of shooting or multiple interviews into a single video.

2. Turn the camera on yourself on location

If you are on the street, in the classroom, on a break, or traveling to local landmarks or cultural attractions, consider turning the video camera on yourself to capture your experience at a given point in time. Tell a quick story about your day or what you are doing at an exact moment in time. Just grab the camera and hold it in your hand at arms length and interview yourself (remember, keep the camera steady).

3. Interview local people on the street or fellow classmates and faculty

Do quick impromptu interviews of people you encounter. Be sure to have them say and spell their name and where they are from (also spell out locations). Just ask the person what they are doing,

why they are doing it, etc. (the typical who, what, where, why, when, how, etc.). Just be sure to capture some B-roll of close ups, medium shots, and wide shots that can be used to weave into their interview. Refer to the example Flip Example Video Story, included with this training document

Great Examples of Study Abroad Videos Shot and Edited by a Professional Videographer

Here are some examples of great study abroad videos that were shot by Boston University. Observe what you are seeing and hearing in each of the videos. Notice the wide variety of shots in the videos that are seen while people are being interviewed – different locations looped together with a variety of shots, including close ups, medium shots, and wide shots.

<http://www.bu.edu/abroad/ecuador-immersion>

<http://www.bu.edu/abroad/finding-the-galapagos>

<http://www.bu.edu/abroad/engineering-south-of-the-border>

<http://www.bu.edu/abroad/media/touching-the-sky-in-tiputini/>

<http://www.bu.edu/bostonia/winter-spring10/kenya>

Questions/Troubleshooting Help

If you have questions about the Flip camera or experience any issues, please feel free to contact Doug Minor, managing editor/director of Web publishing, at (603) 656-6184, dminor@anselm.edu, or via AIM chat at username saintanselmweb.