

Guide to video preparation

REQUIREMENTS

- Suggested format MP4 with H.264 codec for the digital video.
- Recommended aspect ratio 16:9.
- The video MUST stay within 5 minutes, but 2-3 minutes is a more suitable duration.
- Title and credits should total no more than 10s.
- Resolution should be at least 720px x 480px, the higher, the better.
- The video MUST be uploaded on YouTube and embedded in the project website.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

There are many ways to organize a video presentation, just as there are many ways to write prose. You should select a theme for the video and present the research in a way that contributes to this goal. It is generally not a good idea to simply show all the features of your system; you should identify what is novel and interesting. Emphasize the problems or issues being addressed. Present the concepts and principles upon which the work is based. Always clearly state the status of what is being shown. If you are simulating any aspect of the system, be sure to mention this.

Your video should be understandable by itself. Therefore, most videos will need a short introduction explaining the goals and context of the work. Your video should also be understandable to viewers who are not familiar with the subject.

EXPOSITION AND PRESENTATION

The exposition style of your video presentation will greatly affect its impact. Use both the visual and audio capabilities of video. Always explain what is about to happen or what is most interesting: as the narrator, tell the viewer where to look and what to look for. Visual aids, such as callouts, annotations and captions, can help orient the viewer. Make your point once, and make it effectively; avoid being repetitious.

When appropriate, seek a variety of images: switch between face, screen, hands, and slides to keep the viewer's interest. If possible, start out with an establishing shot, which shows the context of the subject and/or group. This might be a wide shot of the group in a meeting room, a split-screen shot of users in different locations, a wide shot of a meeting participant at the computer or of the entire computer screen. This helps the viewer stay oriented. Periodically return to an establishing shot to prevent viewer confusion.

Each shot should be visually well composed. Avoid having the subject in the exact middle of the screen. Pay attention to the background and colors; the eye is drawn to the most brightly colored part of the scene. Make the lightest and brightest part be the point of interest. Carefully consider lighting and make sure that there are no distracting shadows, especially on faces (a common occurrence with overhead lighting).

Do not overuse panning, zooming and other moving shots. Begin and end each moving shot with a static shot. Avoid visual distractions, such as idly moving the mouse. Fades to black can be used as transitions between scenes, but they should not be overused. A full screen fade

usually indicates a change in subject, time or place, and can be confusing when used elsewhere.

AUDIO

Audio quality is as important as image quality to the overall impact of your video. Try to avoid recording the noise of computer fans and disks. It is generally better to record the audio separately, by doing a voice-over in a studio or other quiet room. With a voice-over, you watch the video and record the sound that explains what is happening. Make sure that the discussion is synchronized with the action on the screen. If you have introductory “talking heads,” try to do these with the computer off, or with the microphones arranged so that the computer noise is not picked up. Another motivation for doing a voice-over afterwards is that the person operating the computer can concentrate on the demo and go as fast as possible without awkward pauses while he or she thinks about what to say next.