Video Shooting Tips

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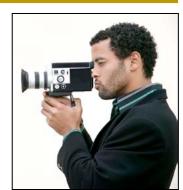& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

fact sheet

Videos are a great way to 1) overcome learning barriers such as language differences and illiteracy and 2) clarify difficult concepts. In addition, since "seeing is believing", a video can help people decide to adopt new practices. However, all the time spent preparing for production of a video can be lost if the footage taken is no good.

Here are some important tips to remember while taking the raw video footage to ensure a better final product.

Important tips to consider before and during a video shoot

1) **Plan ahead**. Before taking any video, write an outline identifying the key concepts you need to cover and thus the footage necessary to complete the video. Each Script might only have 5-8 key points.

2) **Record 8 to 10 seconds of video per shot**. Excessively short video shots are difficult to edit and very long video lengths need too much computer storage space. For our purposes, we are after a final produced video of 2-3 minutes.

3) **Stop the camera before catching action in another area**. Stopping the camera means less wasted video and thus less video that needs to be edited.

4) **Always use a monopod or tripod.** The shots will be much smoother (less shaking) using a support. If there is no monopod or tripod, take fewer close-ups shots to avoid excessive shaking. Stick to wider shoots and/or get closer to the action.

Use "cut-ins" to emphasize a point

5) **Use pans, zooms, and tilting video shots only when necessary**. Too many pans, zooms, and tilts is a sure sign of an 'amateur' and can be disorienting for the viewer.

6) **Do not shoot in the direction of a light source (e.g., the sun)** as this makes it harder to see detail and dulls colors.

7) **Vary your shot angles**. Take footage from different angles (e.g., above, below or to the side of the object of interest).

8) **Use a sequence of shots for "cut-away" and "cut-in" edits**. Take a series of shots varying in distance from the topic of interest. A cut-away shot is usually of something different but relevant to the subject matter. Example, a whole field when the main subject is diseased plants. A cut-in shot is usually a close up of a different part of the subject to emphasize something (e.g., the spots on a leaf of a diseased plant).

9) **On-screen text**. When shooting, consider where textual material may be placed on the screen when editing. Usually, text will be placed on the bottom of the screen.