IAABC Video Shooting and Editing Tips

Equipment

Whenever possible, shoot your video on a tripod. The video will look a lot better when held steady. There are tripods available for both camcorders and smartphones. If you don't have a tripod, another option is to rest the equipment on something flat, level and stable. You want to make sure that the scene you want to film will be in the frame before shooting.

Microphones built into camcorders only work within a few feet of the camera. If possible, use an external microphone, such as a lapel mic or a bluetooth earpiece. For smartphones, try to have the phone as close to the scene you are filming as possible. There are even microphone options for smartphones.

If there are other people in the video, it's a good idea to have them fill out a simple waiver for their permission to use the video on public platforms, such as Youtube or for the IAABC Journal site. We have a Media Release form available on request.

Lighting

Good lighting will make an incredible difference in the quality of the video footage that you shoot. Shooting outside will give you the best results. If filming outside, shooting on overcast days can provide better lighting than full sun days. Don't shoot with the camera facing toward the sun as this can make the video difficult to watch.

If you're shooting inside, try to turn on as many lights as possible, and bring the lights close to your video subject. You do not want your subject backlit.

Sound

Always be conscious of the background sound, and try to control it as much as possible. If filming outside, try to film on a calm day with minimal wind. Find an area with no background noise such as automobile sounds, etc. If someone is filming for you, please be sure that they do not talk or make other sounds such as loud breathing, coughing, etc.

If you're filming inside, turn off fans or other appliances that make humming sounds, and close windows to block outside noises.

Do a test run of your video first to make sure there is no overwhelming background noise, such as wind. You may not realize how loud it will sound on the video until you listen to it, so it's best to review the sound prior to starting filming.

Filming

When shooting video footage, try to hold every shot for at least five seconds; this will give you buffer footage that makes editing easier.

Before hitting the record button, compose the shot. Are you cutting off someone's head? Also, check the background for any distracting or unsightly objects. Sometimes, you're so focused on your subject that you don't notice the surrounding elements of the scene.

Just as with photography, you should typically shoot close on your subjects. Fill the LCD monitor of your camcorder, or screen of your smartphone, with the main subject being shot. The more background distractions you have in your shots, the less appealing it will be.

In general, do not pan at all, either back and forth, or up and down.

Filming from a pre-written script can be very helpful as you can be sure to say everything you meant to say, whereas when you improvise you may forget an item and have to go back to film again.

It is best to film more than you think you need—we can always edit it before it goes into the journal, and sometimes you get footage that's better than you planned!

Notes for Phone Users:

- If you are using a smartphone to film, make sure you hold the phone in a LANDSCAPE orientation and not portrait.
- Hold the phone as steady as possible if you do not have a tripod handy. If you can set the phone up on a flat service, that will help steady the video. If you have to hold the phone, make sure you hold it with both hands.

- Make sure your shot is in focus. Most smartphone cameras have a "tap to focus" option.
- Make sure you are also as close to your subject as possible. Remember that videos online are usually smaller on the screen, particularly is shown on a site without a full-screen option. You should try to fill the frame as much as possible with your subject(s).
- If you are going to zoom, make sure you start filming *after* you zoom. Otherwise the final video will be pixelated and low quality.
- Put your phone on airplane mode before filming! It will give you a longer battery life and not disturb your filming.
- If you will be filming for a while, have some type of battery backup with you.