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Guide to media formats

Media formats are the containers that carry your message. There are a variety of media formats you can use. In this guide, you'll see how 5 common media formats stack up against each other.

Media format	Effective in	Reach	Effort required
Posters/ banners	Generating awareness.	Generally low. Depends on the location. High–traffic locations may give a wider reach.	Little effort required. Can be easily created using free low-cost software.
E-mail newsletters	Creating a following and building a loyal network.	Generally low. Only to subscribers; unless your subscriber base is very large.	Little effort required. Software is available to easily create and maintain e-mail newsletters.
Websites/blogs	Quickly building a channel for instant communication and sharing of ideas.	Very high on the Internet.	Little effort required. Software is available to easily create websites and blogs.
Videocasts/ audiocasts	Capturing and sharing of messages that are more visual or aural in nature. E.g. sharing of holiday pictures.	Very high on the Internet.	More effort required. You need to know how to operate the camera, edit the footage and upload the video or audio files.
Interactive applications	Creating an interactive and engaging multimedia experience that can capture attention quickly.	Very high on the Internet.	Substantial effort required. You need to know about programming languages and how to stitch everything together.

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Media tools

Here are some tools that you can use to create different media types. We've focused on listing free or low-cost software.

Image editing

Tool	Description
Picnik www.picnik.com	Easy to use online photo editor (free)
Pixlr www.pixlr.com/	Similar to Picnik (free)
Adobe's Photoshop Elements http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopelwin/	A basic version of Photoshop (commercial)

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Audio editing

Tool	Description
Audacity audacity.sourceforge.net/	Easy to use audio editor (free)
Power Sound Editor http://www.free-sound-editor.com/	Similar to Audacity (free)

Video editing

Tool	Description
Adobe Premiere Elements http://www.adobe.com/products/premiereel/	Easy to use video editor (commercial)
Movie Maker (Windows) iMovie (Macintosh)	Desktop software, usually available with the operating system (free)

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Blogging

Tool	Description
Wordpress http://www.wordpress.com/	Easy to use blogging tool (free)
Blogger http://www.blogger.com/	Similar to Wordpress (free)

Websites

Tool	Description
Adobe Dreamweaver http://www.adobe.com/products/dreamweaver/	Professional–level website creation tool (commerical)
Wordpress http://www.wordpress.com/	In addition to being a blogging tool, Wordpress is also a very easy to use website creation tool (free)

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Authoring tools

Tool	Description
Udutu http://www.udutu.com/	Easy to use authoring tool (free)