



Do's and Don'ts of Digital Video creation

A presentation at the Courtyard, Mt. Pleasant

Last Updated on 11/30/2023



Do's

1. Start with the highest quality source footage you can get. (High resolution)
2. Attempt to use a more standard source format like MP4 if possible. While no format is future-proof, having a more standard format to work with will make it easier to use the content.
 - a. Transcode the video into a more standard format if necessary.
3. Have an updated copy of whatever software you're using to edit the footage.
4. Use a higher quality presentation device.
(Even high-quality video can look terrible on a low quality tv/projector.)
5. Practice with the content and presentation device beforehand.
6. Having a growth/learning mindset when starting



Do Not's

1. Avoid up-sampling (zooming-in/increasing resolution) the source footage if you can avoid it.
2. Don't use too many effects that could distract away from the main message.
3. Avoid using too much unnecessary motion.
4. Don't be reliant on one source for the data. Have it available on a backup thumb drive and a cloud source (if allowed).
5. Don't expect to be awesome editing video at first. Like anything, it takes practice!



Links and other Resources

[Camtasia](#) – Video editor created by TechSmith

[TechSmith Video Academy](#) – Videos that show you how to better videos.

[Tutorials](#) – Additional resources about how to use Camtasia



[HandBrake](#) – Open-Source Video Transcoder

Use HandBrake if you have some non-standard format that Camtasia or another editor won't recognize.

[Settings for Handbrake](#) – Please see links below.



Q&A

Before I came out to do the presentation, I spoke with the Technical Product Manager for Camtasia and asked him some questions based on some background information regarding your “typical” use cases for video. Here were his answers.

Background Info

The amount of video and audio that currently floats into the standard Prosecutor's Office is staggering. Here's just a short list:

- ✓ Retail store video (various formats). Used to be just large retailers, now any mom and pop store
- ✓ Home video (think Ring)
- ✓ In Car video (from patrol vehicles, various formats)
- ✓ Body Worn Camera (BWC) that more officers are being deployed with
- ✓ Witness / Victim / Suspect / Defendant video from cellphones
- ✓ Jail supplied tablets for remote visits between a prisoner and family or friends
- ✓ Audio from: body wires, forwarded voice mail, jail/prison phone calls

Question:

Regarding the above formats, is it likely that most of these devices have standardized on MP4 now?

Answer:

No, probably not unfortunately and even if they have, sometimes they have a lot of information in them that puts the file in a weird state.

Question:

If these devices have non-standard outputs would Handbrake or Adobe Media transcoder be recommended to get them into a better format to process?

Answer:

Attempt to import files into Camtasia and if everything works the way they want, great. If the playback performance isn't great, [try to Proxy the file in the media bin](#). ([Another link about proxy video](#).) Right click on the file in the media bin and choose Proxy Video > Create Proxy Video

Note: Depending on the resolution of the original file, it may look blurry in the canvas. However, this is only in the canvas when you export your project out as an MP4, it will export out at its original quality and resolution.

If the file can't be imported into Camtasia, I'd recommend Handbrake.

I've created a Preset for them that they can import into Handbrake:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z59VnaEAiFMVZhjRQRSMtzJ9-QwT-Itz/view?usp=sharing>

How to import preset file into Handbrake: <https://app.screencast.com/Bre3KUYLRH5P8>



Q&A during the presentation

Question:

Don: What sort of system specs would you recommend on a machine for doing video editing?

Answer:

[Here are our posted system specifications for the software](#). I have to admit that they're a bit lower than I thought they'd be especially for the "Recommended Specifications". Having at least 32GB of RAM and a decent SSD for data storage/retrieval wouldn't be a bad idea.