Introduction

When thinking about video production, it is easy to focus on the tools required. While the quality of the software and hardware used does have a bearing on how professional a video will look, the preparation done prior to recording will set you up for success.

This guide will look at how to best prepare to record a video, as well as some of the tools available to make and edit a video.

Planning Your Video

Define Your Purpose

This might seem obvious, but by actually defining the purpose of your video you may realize the scope of content is too broad for video format or should be separated into a series of videos. Having a defined purpose will make sure you understand whether or not your video will achieve its intended message.

Understand Your Audience

Understanding the demographics and attitudes of your intended audience will help you determine the most effective way to communicate to those particular viewers in particular. This will help shape the content of the video. Ask yourself if everything you plan to include in the video is relevant to the target audience, or ways in which you can make the content relatable.

Too much information?

If you realize you are trying to serve multiple purposes and reach multiple target audiences, don’t be afraid to make multiple videos. Trying to create one video for multiple purposes will likely make the video too long, losing your viewers’ attention. Making shorter targeted videos is generally more effective than making one long video. It is also easier to make and edit shorter videos.
Scripting Your Video

Once you have determined the purpose and intended audience for your video, a script and storyboard should be created.

The script should include all actions to be taken in the video. Consider:

• If you are demoing software, you should make sure you understand what you are going to say, the actions you are going to take in the software, and the behavior of the software based on your actions.

• If using supporting material, such as a PowerPoint presentation, you should make sure you know all the content and animations on the slides and exactly what you are going to say as you advance through the presentation.

• If recording a video where you are filming yourself, you should know exactly what you are going to say and where you are going to film.

An easy way to create a storyboard and a script is to use PowerPoint. You can use the PowerPoint slides to map out the visuals of the video and the notes section to add notes and the narration:

Quick Tip

When writing your script you should make sure you are not trying to do more than one action at a time. The script above is written so that the person recording isn’t talking and navigating the software at the same time. This is hard to do and will lead to many re-takes!
Recording Your Video

Tips for Recording Yourself or Others in a Video

1. **Record in a well-lit room.** Wherever possible use natural light. If indoors try to use natural light from windows. If there is no natural light, avoid overhead lighting. Use lamps instead. Make sure you pay attention to shadows.

2. **Film for sound.** If you have unclear audio, you will lose your audience immediately. If filming outside, pay attention to any background noises that may detract from your video.

3. **Keep your background simple.** Whether filming in or outdoors, you need to pay attention to what is in the frame. A messy or cluttered background is distracting and unprofessional looking. A home office or workplace setting is always a good place to film for a generic neutral background.

4. **Keep it steady.** Shaky footage will look unprofessional. It is very hard to hold a camera steady when filming a video. Use a tripod or solid surface to position the camera. This simple step will lead to more professional results.

5. **Keep it level.** Make sure the camera is level when filming. If the camera is slightly off, it will show in the video. Most devices have an option to use a grid which is invaluable in helping to make sure the shot is level.

6. **Shoot in landscape (horizontal).** When using a phone to record, shoot with the phone in the horizontal position. The video will work much better on larger screens than a video filmed in a vertical position.

7. **Use your phones ‘back’ camera.** The camera on the back of the phone is generally better quality than the front facing camera. If you have already figured out the positioning in your video, you will not need to see yourself while filming.

8. **Don’t be afraid to re-shoot.** If it is not perfect the first time don’t worry! You can always reshoot until you are happy with the outcome.

9. **Camera presence.** Before recording, think about your camera presence. Make sure you are calm and relaxed. When filming, use open body language and take deep breaths! Smiling at the start of your video makes you seem friendly. Slow down your pace when you talk on camera. Remember your viewers need time to digest what you are saying.

10. **Practice, practice, practice!!** While there is no harm in doing multiple takes for a video, it can get frustrating. Practicing before filming will minimize the need to re-shoot over and over again.

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My Script is Complete!

Once you have written a script and created a storyboard, you should run through it.

It will almost certainly be necessary to make revisions to the script, rearranging the order of the content and deleting sections if you realize the video will be too long.

Remember, making these edits now is a lot easier than editing the video itself. If the video is too long the message may be lost, so keep it as brief as possible.

Once you have a complete script and storyboard, you are ready to think about making your video!
Recording Your Video (Continued)

Tips for Recording a Software Demo or Presentation

If you are recording a software demo, consider your screen resolution. Make sure the software you are demoing is going to be readable to the viewer and that everything fits into the frame of the video.

If recording a presentation such as a PowerPoint, make sure the fonts in the presentation are large enough to be readable on the video. Make sure animations and transitions between slides are smooth so the viewer focusses on what you are presenting not how you are presenting it.

As with filming yourself it is important to practice. If you practice, there will be less awkward pauses in the presentation and it will flow better.

Quick Tips

Regardless of the type of video you are making, you can always do a quick test recording to check the quality of what is on screen and the audio. Doing this will mean that you don’t waste time attempting a real recording just to find out there is something on the screen that shouldn’t be or that your microphone isn’t working effectively.

Any video can be recorded in smaller chunks and then edited into one video using editing software. Some options to do this are outlined below.

Recording Hardware

For recording video most cell phones will produce high quality images. They shoot video in standard formats that can be uploaded to sites such as YouTube and edited using video editing software.

If a cell phone isn’t available, a digital camera can also be used for recording video. Many low priced digital cameras are capable of recording high definition video. As with cell phones, the videos record in a standard format that is easy to work with.

When doing a screen capture video such as a software demonstration or a presentation, it will be necessary to use a tool that captures the screen and records audio.

All cases outlined above will produce high quality video output. The area many devices are lacking is the quality of the built in microphone. For both cell phones and cameras, external microphones can be purchased inexpensive and will greatly improve the quality of the audio captured. If you are recording on a device such as a laptop, you may have the same experience. Again, an external microphone can be bought cheaply.

The only way to know the quality of the audio your device produces is by trying it. If the audio quality is lacking, remember that finding a good microphone doesn’t have to be expensive.
Recording Using Zoom

As mentioned in the last section, if you are filming a video of yourself, a cell phone or digital camera should suffice. If you are looking to do a screen capture or a recording of a presentation, there are many tools available to you.

One tool that is widely available at UCR is Zoom. If you are already familiar with using Zoom for meetings you are only a couple of steps away from recording your own video!

1. Start a Zoom meeting (there doesn’t need to be any attendees)
2. Once the meeting is started click the **Share Screen** button on the toolbar at the bottom of the screen:

![Share Screen button](image)

3. Choose the application you want to share and click the **Share** button
4. Once recording, hover your mouse at the top of your screen to view the toolbar, hover over the **More** menu and click **Record to the Cloud**:

![More menu with Record to the Cloud option](image)

5. When you are finished recording, navigate back to the toolbar and under the **More** menu select **Stop Recording**. You will receive the following message:

![Stop recording notification](image)

Once you stop the recording, you will receive an email that provides instructions on how to download your video.

**Note:** You can download the video file, or just the audio.

**Quick Tips**

You can also use Zoom to record video using your computer’s built in camera. If you are not already familiar with Zoom, there are resources available to help you get up and running. For additional Zoom resources visit the links below:

- [Zoom Video Conferencing Knowledge Base Article](#)
- [Keep Teaching Zoom Page](#)
Additional Recording Software

There are numerous tools available to accomplish screen capture recording. There are both paid and fee-based options. Below are links to some of the more popular choices. Many tools offer free trials, so experimenting with a few to see which tool works best is advisable, especially if looking to invest money.

- Loom (free)
- ShareX (free)
- Camtasia (fee based)
- Adobe Captivate (fee based)

Video Editing Software

When creating a video, it is likely that you have multiple resources you would like to include. For example, you may have a series of short videos that you want to use to create a single video. You may also want to be able to remove the beginning and end of a video to eliminate the part where you started and ended recording. This is where editing software comes in. The tools to edit video range in terms of functionality and the expertise needed to use them.

Please note that the recording software tools outlined above all have basic editing capabilities that would accomplish the tasks outlined above and are sufficient to meet the needs to create basic video content.

For more advanced requirements there are many tools available. The list below provides links to some of the more popular tools. Most tools offer free trials, so it is certainly a good idea to test out any software before making a purchase.

- Corel VideoStudio
- Filmora
- Pinnacle Studio
- Adobe Premiere

Happy Recording!