



Tips For Capturing Media With Mobiles

This resource provides guidance on how to produce a video using a mobile phone. Its intention is to help you as you plan and develop your video entry.

PLEASE NOTE that it is *only a guide* – you are not expected to follow any of the principles within this document, nor are you expected to buy any new equipment. Most importantly, your entry will not be disadvantaged if you are unable to follow the guide's principles. We want to see your creativity in whichever way you can and choose to show it!

While Smartphones are not as good quality as professional cameras or audio recording devices, they are capable of recording high quality media. Here are some simple tips when working with mobiles:



Mobile Video Cameras

1. Preparation

Phones spend a lot of time in pockets, in bags and being used in all manner of weather and conditions. Make sure the lens is clean and that you have enough storage space to record your project (around 5mb per minute for HD video, 1mb per minute for audio).

2. Think in shots

A "shot" is the smallest unit of video - for example, "a birthday party" is not a shot but "my daughter unwrapping a present" is. The key is to not just let the camera run, but instead consider what you are shooting and what you want to show. Keep your shots short - this will help you to identify clips later and will make you be more selective with your shooting.

3. Orientate your Smartphone to LANDSCAPE

If you shoot a video with your phone upright, it will cause you all kinds of problems when you edit. Shoot everything in LANDSCAPE.

4. Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes

People communicate half of what they mean with their spoken words. The other half happens non-verbally, especially in the eyes. Miss the eyes, and you miss the message. Subtle facial patterns vanish if you're too far away. Stay close enough to see the whites of their eyes to capture expressions.

5. Stand still! Stop fidgeting!

The size of Smartphones means that they are difficult to keep steady. To keep your mobile from shaking, you could put it on a tripod or phone stand instead of holding it. Otherwise hold the camera with both hands and hold it gently. If you take panning or moving shots, do it gently and try not to move suddenly – the refresh-rate on Smartphone cameras is not as good as video cameras and you might end up with blurring or pixellation.





6. Zoom with your feet

Holding a Smartphone and trying to use the built-in zoom at the same time is likely to lead to shaky shots - when you are in a closer zoom position, even the smallest hand movements will be amplified in your recording. For better video do not use the zoom at all - just set your lens wide open (i.e. no zoom), walk closer to your subject, and then shoot. When you stay on the wide end of the zoom lens, minor shaking becomes virtually nil.

7: Keep the light behind you and the camera

The iPhone, like all video cameras, gets confused when it has to deal with multiple light levels in the same shot. It only has one lens, and if it closes that lens in reaction to bright light, something else in the frame that was darker to begin with gets really dark. For example, if you sit your interviewee in front of a bright window, you'll see the beautiful scene outside the window and a black cut-out silhouette of your. To avoid this, keep the window behind you and the camera - the light will fall on your interviewee.

8. Use an External Mic

While you can use your iPhone for video, you may get a better sound if you use an external microphone. A mobile phone adapter will let you connect both a microphone and a pair of headphones to your iPhone's audio jack, so you can record audio and monitor the audio simultaneously.

Check out the *Multimedia Storytelling Guide* for a list of suggested hardware!

9. Edit on the iPhone

You don't need to transfer your footage to your computer to edit it as there are some good editing apps for the iPhone.

Check out the *Multimedia Storytelling Guide* for a list of suggested software!



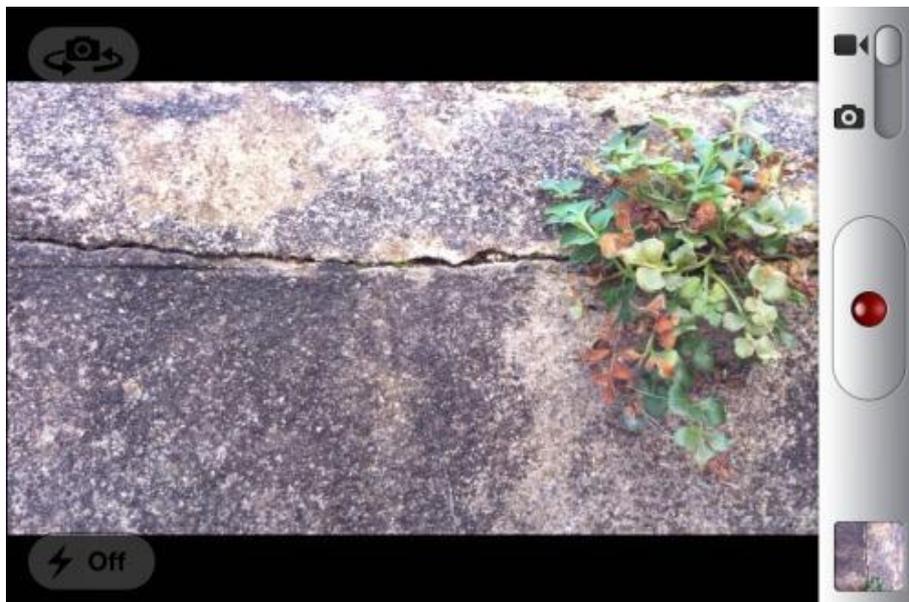


10. Go Widescreen

In camcorder mode, you won't automatically "see" the full version of what is actually being recorded, which means you might not be seeing everything that you are recording (as you can see from the image below, the image is clipped at the edges).



In order to make sure what you see is what's being recorded, you need to double tap the screen (whether the iPhone is recording or not) to get the proper widescreen view to see more of the image.





11. Use the "one-foot rule"

The distance between your mouth and the device largely determines the sound of the recording. As a general rule, hold the device roughly one foot (30 cm) in front of the individual speaking. When recording on a phone, there's a risk of distortion or clipping which occurs if the phone is too close to the mouth.

12. Create cushy surroundings

It is important to be surrounded by soft materials to enhance lower noise frequencies and eliminate some of the higher ones - the more absorbent material around you, the more isolated and undisturbed your recording will be.

13. Use external microphones and audio apps (if you have access to them)

A *shotgun microphone* will pick up atmospheric sounds, good for scene-setting and general audio. A *lavalier microphone* picks up very direct, intimate sound simply by the nature of it being extremely close to the voice. For close-up shots, this works best because the perspective of the camera and the intimate sound of the voice match perfectly.



Fig 1. Shotgun (left) and lavalier (right) microphones offer flexibility not found with on-camera microphones

There are plenty of audio apps to support external microphones that have the ability to save audio files. **Check out the *Multimedia Storytelling Guide* for a list of suggested software!**

