

Media Fellowship Program

Cambridge Community Television

March, April & May, 2009

Orientation: 3/13/2009, 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Set expectations for the program, participants and parent organizations.

Schedule

Fellows arriving at 9AM, coffee and snacks provided, enjoy it while it lasts.

1. 9:00AM Welcome and introductions*
2. 9:15AM Fellowship values and goal setting*
3. 9:45AM Program, participant and supervisor expectations*
4. 9:55AM Schedule and logistics overview*
5. 10:00AM Discussion of organizational roles
6. 11:00AM Pre-assessment of technology skills
7. 11:30PM Introduction to digital storytelling curriculum
8. 11:45PM "The Seven Elements" of storytelling
9. 12:30PM Writing exercises, brainstorming, arcing, etc

Who are we?

1. What is Cambridge Community Television (CCTV)
2. Who is Sean Effel?

Who are you?

The Media Fellows are some or all of the below:

- Career employees of non-profit or city government departments
- Are interested in using digital media to distribute messages
- Have the capacity to provide meaningful media production services (once trained)
- Are supported by their parent agency's leadership and directors in these efforts

Our principles

Why does CCTV offer this program?

- CCTV is in the business of training and empowering communities.
- We already offer a million dollars of gear. How can we get more people using it?

- Organizations could be providing media services for themselves (with our help).
- Organizations could do it better if we could demystify the goals and process.

The Fellowship’s “Highly marketable” goals:

- Gain skills to produce effective digital media for television and the internet
- Gain skills in media project and resource management skills
- Produce several finished video pieces for your organization

“But you can’t get there without these” goals:

- Learn the creative process, critical thinking, and critiquing skills
- Learn methods for conceptualizing, evaluating, and realizing media projects
- Form relationships with other media-oriented professionals and share experiences

Fellowship Expectations

CCTV is providing this fellowship and capacity building program.

Our expectations of the organizations and their fellows:

- We expect full participation by the fellows in all modules, meetings, activities and exercises.
- We expect a genuine interest in learning and acquiring these media making skills.
- We expect the organizational leadership to support the work of the fellows.
- We expect organizations to leverage and implement the newly trained fellows to build sustainable media practices “at home”.

What fellows can expect from CCTV and its trainers:

- CCTV will provide fellows with conceptual and practical training to build the capacity.
- CCTV will provide guidance at group and individual levels on implementing media activities “at home”.
- CCTV will work with fellows to produce several meaningful media pieces that will be useful to their home organizations.
- CCTV will continue to provide free access to our equipment and resources to member organizations.
- CCTV will maintain a mentor/mentee role with the fellows and their organizations beyond the program as needed.

Fellowship Modules and Schedule

View the fellowship group and repository on the CCTV website:

<http://www.cctvcambridge.org/fellowship>

Discussion of Organizational Roles

Fellows can describe the state of their organization's media plan, activities, needs, etc.

Describe:

- What are the needs within the organization for making media?
- What kind of media related activities are already taking place?
- How is the organization distributing its electronic communications?
- What plans do you have to build or grow the media plan and implementation already?
- Where do you, or your directors, see your new skills fitting in?

Technology Skills Pre-Assessment: 3/13/2009

Fellow: _____ Date: _____

The answers to these questions will describe your experience and skill working with digital media technology.

- Please rate your experience producing media with the following **personal** equipment. Circle your choice, 1 through 5. One (1) for beginner and five (5) for advanced.
 1. Writing, editing, posting stuff on the web (email, blogs, photos, etc) 1 2 3 4 5
 2. Office computing skills (word processing, spreadsheets, databases) 1 2 3 4 5
 3. Digital photo cameras (snapshots, vacations, etc) 1 2 3 4 5
 4. Digital video cameras (home movies, class projects, etc) 1 2 3 4 5
 5. Video editing (home movies, etc) 1 2 3 4 5

- Please rate your experience producing media with the following **CCTV** equipment. Circle your choice, 1 through 5. One (1) for beginner and five (5) for advanced.
 - CCTV's website: cctvcambridge.org 1 2 3 4 5
 - The BeLive! Live television set 1 2 3 4 5
 - Digital photo cameras 1 2 3 4 5
 - Digital video cameras 1 2 3 4 5
 - Video editing software 1 2 3 4 5

- Please rate your experience using a PC computer. Circle your choice, 1 through 5. One (1) for beginner and five (5) for advanced. 1 2 3 4 5

- Please rate your experience using a Mac computer. Circle your choice, 1 through 5. One (1) for beginner and five (5) for advanced. 1 2 3 4 5

- Have you used YouTube, Flickr, or other online media sharing services? If so, please describe which applications you have used

Project Management Skills Pre-Assessment

- The following areas have been identified as important project management skills when working on digital media projects. Please rate your skill in each area where one (1) is a low level of skill and five (five) is a high level of skill.
 - Creative/free writing/brainstorming 1 2 3 4 5
 - Script writing 1 2 3 4 5
 - Storyboarding (drawing images to represent the flow of a story) 1 2 3 4 5
 - Event planning (speakers, awards, dinners, marches, rallies) 1 2 3 4 5

Stories move in circles: 3/13/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals:

Introduce the method of creating digital stories through writing and storytelling.

"They don't move in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in circles. There are stories inside stories and stories between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is getting lost. And when you're lost, you start to look around and listen."

Digital Storytelling Workshop Goals

1. Develop critical writing and thinking skills about the process for and the making of media.
2. Develop skill and art in narrowing messages and distilling stories into most effective states.
3. Gain exposure to creative process that will precede most major media-making endeavors.
4. Gain experience in basic digital and multimedia arranging and editing.
5. Share the contexts of our organizational roles, experiences, challenges (aka build fellowship).
6. Complete a short personal narrative video, the first piece of the Media Fellowship program.

What is Digital Storytelling and why is it important to us?

- Stories are the large and small instruments of meaning, of explanation, that we store in our memories. We cannot live without them.
- Storytelling is a fundamental process of communication between human beings and honing our storytelling informs our ability to speak, write, record, produce, edit, and perform.

That reminds me of a story.

Cultural anthropologist Gregory Bateson was asked in the 1950s if he believed that computer artificial intelligence was possible. He responded that he did not know, but he believed when you would ask a computer a yes-or-no question and it responded with "that reminds me of a story," you would be close.

So why is it that when many of us are asked to construct a story as a formal presentation to illustrate a point, we go blank? We informally tell stories all the time, but the conscious construction of story calls up mental blocks. Here are three possible reasons:

- **"My little, overloaded memory bank"**
The problem is about being overwhelmed by stories that we cannot process or retain, details that we can't absorb. At the same time, we are bombarded with millions of indigestible, literally unmemorable, story fragments every time we pick up a phone, bump into a friend, watch TV, listen to the radio, read a book or a newspaper, or browse the Web.

- **“The editor in my head”**
“...most of us carry around a little voice, the editor, that tells us that what we have to say is not important. That editor is a composite figure of everyone in our lives who has diminished our sense of creative ability, from family members, to teachers, to employers, to the society as a whole.”
- **“The good consumer habit”**
...prolonged exposure to mass media over time disintegrates our critical intelligence. Yet, beyond the fact that we are immersed in too much TV, it is the style in which these media, particularly advertising, present themselves that actually affects our sense of ourselves as storytellers. If I can tell you about myself through the shoes, clothes, music, movies I have, why bother being a storyteller?

Finding your story

- “For all these reasons and quite a few others, a person’s initial efforts at story making can be frustrating.”
- “The starting point for overcoming a creative block is to begin with a small idea.”
- “It is a natural tendency to want to make a novel or screenplay out of a portion of our life experiences, to think in terms of getting all the details. But it is exactly that kind of scale that disables our memory.”
- “For many professional communicators, the process of moving from a journalistic or technical, official voice to an organic, natural voice is often difficult.”
- “We have had lots of scripts that started out fresh and authentic, but by the time the authors and collaborators got through with it, it was filled with succinct, gorgeous, yet characterless, prose.”

Kinds of Personal Stories

What are the important characteristics of these types of personal stories?

- Character Stories
- Memorial Stories
- Adventure Stories
- Accomplishment Stories
- Place Stories

The Seven Elements of Story

1. Point (of View)

When we think of a story, true or imagined, we do not consider someone sitting in front of us reciting a series of events like a robot: "This happened, then this happened, and then this happened." Hardly anyone narrates events in their lives without some good reason for it.

"The other day I asked my 7-year-old daughter about the meaning of life. "Well," she answered without hesitation, "there's having fun, having love in your family, and learning things, you know, knowledge." I spent 49 years searching for the meaning of life. I guess I should have had the good sense to ask a kid in the first place."

2. Dramatic Question

Simply making a point doesn't necessarily keep people's attention throughout a story. Well-crafted stories, from Shakespeare to Seinfeld, set up a tension from the beginning that holds you until the end.

Where are you going with this? What is the arc of this story?

"When I was young, I never really understood what friendship was. I was shy, and confused friendship with popularity. Last year I met Tanya, and we became the kind of friends that most people are, acquaintances. Tanya had started an organization for women like herself. Tanya had AIDS and knew she would die soon, and she wanted to find someone to love and care for her children. The minute Tanya opened her mouth it was like the whole world had been waiting to hear her story. But despite all her work, she really felt she had accomplished one thing, and it was [her friendship with] me, and I couldn't let her dreams die with her. The other night Tanya told me to lay my head down next to hers. She whispered, "Monte Fae, all we got is where we are going." I couldn't believe she knew my middle name."

The statement of the dramatic question is elegantly posed and resolved in the first and closing lines.

A good author will make you think the central dramatic question was "Will the girl get the guy?" when it really was "Will the girl find happiness?"

3. Emotional Content

One of the fundamental ways to understand story's role in our lives is to think of most stories as resurrection tales. A character must know a negation of their desire in order to finally achieve their desire.

In the tragic form, the protagonist is usually destroyed in order that other characters, and we the audience, can understand the consequence of the fatal flaw of the character and/or the poignant power of circumstance/fate. In the comic form, love must certainly be lost at some point for us to feel great satisfaction of the final hope for embrace. The hero must be on the very edge of extinction before victory or the goal of the quest is achieved.

Why is this so powerful? The stories we are drawn to, that resonate in our direct emotional need, in general, are those that give us a reason to make that decision to go forward. They inspire us. The very

word inspire, in its archaic sense, means to breath again. Stories encourage us to take one more breath, to swim up to the surface, above our despair, and live.

4. Voice

"I grew up with a lisp. When I was seven or eight, I had to go to speech therapy classes tho I wouldn't thspeak tho listhpisthly. Like most kids, it made me hate the way my voice sounded. That didn't stop me from being the class clown and being the ham in school productions, or perhaps it emboldened me. But when I first ran into a tape recorder, I couldn't stand the way I sounded. And frankly, it still bothers me."

Those of us fortunate enough to be able to talk out loud should love our voices, because they tell everyone so much about who we are, both how strong we can be and how fragile.

We have one specific concern to address about recording our voices: reading versus reciting the script. We all know what it feels like to be at a public event when someone reads a speech from beginning to end. It is downright uncomfortable. We do not know how to interact.

5. The Power of the Soundtrack

...working with beginning students shows that their intuitive sense of what music is appropriate for a media piece is by far their most developed skill in the storytelling arts.

Are music videos, or the juxtaposition of music and visual information in a media piece without text and voiceover, storytelling? The answer is yes. However, the specificity of language and the complexity of information that the human voice provides adds enormous emotional substance and authenticity to a media story. So far, we have not experienced a single music video that created as powerful an emotional impact as the same story would have with the addition of the author's voice.

6. Economy

Storytelling with images means consciously economizing language in relationship to the additional narrative that is provided by the juxtaposition of images. There are two tracks of meaning, the visual and the auditory, and we need to think about the degree of closure each provides in relation to the other.

Invariably some part of your story calls out for the use of an image that is not literally related to the subject being described. In talking about the end of a romance, you may not have an image that can literally represent loss, but you could show a photograph tearing apart or a heart splitting in two pieces. The implicit meaning, the metaphor, is clear to almost anyone.

Similarly, we can "read" the juxtaposition of visual images as having implicit meaning that is beyond what one or the other image explicitly means by itself. If we have an image of a couple sitting together, followed by the image of one of the couple sitting alone next to an empty chair, we will read the juxtaposition as loss.

7. Pace

Pacing is considered by many to be the true secret of successful storytelling. The rhythm of a story determines much of what sustains an audience's interest. A fast-paced movie with many quick edits and upbeat music can suggest urgency, action, nervousness, exasperation, and excitement. Conversely, a slow pace will suggest contemplation, romanticism, relaxation, or simple pleasures.

Vitality is the essential issue. Good stories breathe. They generally move along at an even pace, but once in a while they stop. They take a deep breath and proceed. Or if the story calls for it, they walk a little faster, and faster, until they are running, but sooner or later they have to stop and wheeze at the side of the road.

Digital storytelling examples:

- POV, Ironing:
<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=4>
- Dramatic Question, The Talking Tree:
<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=8>
- Voice, Teen Empowerment:
<http://www.creativenarrations.net/site/storybook/ywca/elsa.html>
- Misc, Those People:
<http://www.creativenarrations.net/site/storybook/index.html>

Writing Exercises

Our friend, the 4x6 index card...

Take 10 minutes for some of these prompts to write on an index card. Try this one first:

In our lives, there are moments, decisive moments, when the direction of our lives was pointed in a given direction, and because of the events of this moment, we are going in another direction. Poet Robert Frost shared this concept simply as The Road Not Taken. The date of a major achievement, the time there was a particularly bad setback, meeting a special person, the birth of a child, the end of a relationship, the death of a loved one are all examples of these fork-in-the-road experiences. Right now, at this second, write about a decisive moment in your life. You have 10 minutes.

Some other possible prompts

- Tell the story of a mentor or hero in your life.
- Describe a time when you felt really scared.
- And of course, the old standby, what was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you?

Sharing exercises

Take 5 minutes each to share with a partner some reflections on these prompts.

- Tell the story of a major personal success or personal failure in your agency or organization.
- Tell the story of your first task on the job and how well you were prepared for it.

Stories move in circles: 3/18/2009 9AM-1PM

Scripting, Storyboarding, Recording Voices

Today's Goals

7. Read, share, discuss, sharpen our written stories.
8. Rewrite scripts, finalize writing, begin storyboarding.
9. Develop a plan for collecting images, artifacts, and visuals.
10. Cross the line into production of our digital stories by recording, shooting, etc.
11. Finish the morning session ready to go into full production on Day 3.
12. If possible, workshop on Mac file management and establishing workspace.

Materials include: note cards, paper, blank storyboard sheets, laptop workstations.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?
- Follow up on discussions with supervisors or directors?
- Other Review?

9:30AM: The "Story Circle"

One of the most valuable tools in developing a story: sharing with others.

- Share this story within your small group and discuss the strengths of the story.
- Use the seven elements of storytelling to help strengthen each other's stories.
- Look for the entry point, develop that dramatic question and story arc.
- Take good notes with intent to edit.
- Spend the remaining part of the hour rewriting and finalizing the story.

10:30AM: Discovering Images

Some discussion on etiquette for collecting images.

- Look into photo archives that already exist, especially digital.
- Look to scrap books, organizational newsletters, publications, etc.
- Look to co-workers, constituents, family, friends.
- Look for literal and representational imagery.
- Where you should not look (nor rely) for finding images = internet.

10:45AM: Storyboarding

One of the most valuable tools in developing a story: sharing with others.

- Your storyboard is a workplan for making the video of your digital story.
- Good work here makes other work easier to do.
- Using the example storyboard page, and blank storyboard pages, begin mocking up your video.

11:45AM: Preparing your Desktop Workspace

A fast introduction to working in a Mac OSX environment. Here are the important points that we will cover:

1. Keeping all of your media and project files in the same place!
2. Creating and naming folders (voiceover, images, soundtrack, etc)
3. Suggested folder purposes and names.

12:15PM: Get to work!

Take some time to build a battle plan for:

4. Homework includes = finish writing and editing, find images
5. Use the remaining 45 minutes to work
6. Use this time to get a head start on voiceover recording, if possible.

Stories move in circles: 3/19/2009 9AM-5PM

Media Acquisition

Today's Goals (morning / afternoon)

- Gather all digital media into one place (voiceover, images, soundtrack)
- Shoot, scan, collect images – record voiceovers
- Create first blank edit project and learn cuts-only Final Cut Pro editing techniques
- Use storyboard to create rough draft of digital story.
- Evaluate digital story work so far to be sure its going in the right direction.
- Head home for last opportunity to collect more images and/or artifacts.
- Prepare to finish the fine cutting work tomorrow and screen the final works.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?
- Introduce Amy Mertl and Julie Adler as technology trainers

9:30AM: Acquiring Images

This little unit will talk about the best practices of acquiring images from many different sources.

- Where are the images coming from? (Personal digital photos, scrapbooks, hard copy etc)
- Naming conventions, categorization
- Moving digital image files from personal collections
- Shooting new photos (of yourselves, obviously)
- Re-shooting prints with digital photo cameras
- Scanning images that digital cameras won't do justice.

10:00AM: Acquiring voiceover

CCTV staff will lead each participant in recording voiceovers, but here are the tips that will help you perform well.

- Reading, reciting, adlibbing?
- Take breaks between sentences for easy edit points. You'll thank yourself.
- Feel free to rerecord as much as you like.

10:15AM: Get to work!

At this point, everyone will have different needs. Get to work, reconvene at 12:15 to leave for lunch.

12:15PM: Get Some Lunch**12:45PM: Final Cut Pro Workshop I (Cuts only method)**

This is the fellows first time touching digital editing software. Here are the absolute basics required to build a basic cuts-only based on the storyboards from yesterday. The points:

- Starting a new project in Final Cut Pro.
- Assigning scratch disks, saving empty project files
- What are all these windows? Arranging windows and workspace
- Importing media
- Saving often
- Get to know your Undo button
- The only two tools you need this morning – the pointer and the razor blade!
- Moving files around on the timeline.
- The Play and Stop buttons.
- Cutting audio and video files
- Stretching audio and video files
- Now recreate your storyboard in Final Cut Pro

1:45PM: Get Back to Work!

With the new Final Cut Pro primer, fellows will get about 3 hours to arrange, edit, and practice these new skills.

4:30PM: Preview of works in progress

This will be an opportunity to screen work with teams of three or as a whole and discuss with each other the progress of their digital story.

5:00PM: The Squishy End of this Day

This should be the end of the day, but we have the flexibility to work until 5:45PM if need be and if fellows are able/capable/interested in doing this.

Stories move in circles: 3/20/2009 9AM-5PM

Today's Goals (morning / afternoon)

1. Gather all digital media into one place (voiceover, images, soundtrack)

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:30PM: Final Cut Pro Workshop II (Transitions, Special Effects)

This is the last of the FCP training that the students will need to put finishing touches on their work.

- Transitions between images
- Zooming/rotating/flipping/cropping/offsetting images.
- Transparency of images
- Audio Levels

10:15AM: Get to work!

At this point, everyone will have different needs. Get to work, reconvene at 12:15 to leave for lunch.

12:15PM: Get Some Lunch

12:45PM: Get Back to Work!

4:00PM: Final Bell!

At this point, if the fellows are not completed with their digital stories then we are in emergency mode.

4:30PM: Screening Setup

At this point, if the fellows are not completed with their digital stories then we are in emergency mode.

5:00PM: Screening Seating Begins

5:15PM: Screening Starts

This should be the end of the day, but we have the flexibility to work until 5:45PM if need be and if fellows are able/capable/interested in doing this.

This is a Message: 3/27/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Reflect on the digital storytelling process and lessons learned, then discuss and understand the history and practice of PSA in mass media, conceptualize agency PSA production.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:30AM: Reflection on Digital Storytelling Workshop

Let's spend a little time reviewing the digital storytelling experience.

- What were your reactions to the finished pieces?
- What were the reactions of other people?

Looking back on last week's experience, what lessons have we learned?

- Good writing and reflection make for stronger projects
- Outside perspective on your work is critical
- You are all very talented in composing pieces, but you didn't know it
- Things always look their best on the big screen

What were the production skills we learned?

- Preproduction is important. Like, really important.
- Using simple production tools (like digital photo cameras, digital photos, etc)
- Digital file management
- Basic Final Cut Pro "cuts only" editing approach
- Basic transition, special effects, etc, in Final Cut Pro.

10:15AM: Introduction to Public Service Announcements

Wikipedia says:

"A public service announcement (PSA) or community service announcement (CSA) is a non-commercial advertisement broadcast on radio or television, ostensibly for the public interest. PSAs are intended to modify public attitudes by raising awareness about specific issues."

The US Government says a PSA is:

“...any announcement for which no charge is made and which promotes programs, activities, or services of federal, state, or local governments or the programs, activities or services of non-profit and other announcements regarded as serving community interests, excluding time signals, routine weather announcements and promotional announcements.”

Interesting factoid:

“In the U.S, the role of PSAs was negatively affected by deregulation of the broadcasting industry in the 1980s. Previously, broadcast licenses were issued to television or radio stations with the expectation that they serve as “public trustees” and air PSAs (in addition to other requirements).”

Elements of Public Service Announcements:

- Short, time is at a premium and complicated messages are lost
- Address a single issue, concept, campaign – not many
- Convince, persuade, change thought, change behavior
- Appeal to some human emotion (compassion, injustice, humor, etc)
- In the end, it’s a distilled vehicle for a single message
- Refer viewers to a place for more information.
- What else?

These are PSAs:

Joan Chen “Join Me”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m32G-VePisM>

Cyberbully

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seOQyMvG99w>

Obesity

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I01WHOCUHkc>

Credit Fairy

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nd3oI6ILWQ>

Fatherhood Involvement

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9A2Ap3DyvLg>

“Good Idea, Bad Idea”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Jyf-USBwZg>

David Lynch’s “Clean Up New York”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSWv90msTUc>

These are not PSAs:

Dwight Schrute "Bears"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYkWWnZm6-w>

Homeowners Rehab

<http://www.cctvcambridge.org/node/7972>

10:45AM: Introduce the PSA production assignment

The objective is to produce a 30 second public service announcement that conveys one message from your organization to the public at large - but this experience will introduce you to CCTV's portable production equipment.

- PSAs should be 30 seconds. If you can't deliver a message in 30 secs then your message is too complex!
- PSAs can be made up of 4-6 shots, including photos and title screens.
- Cast yourselves in your PSAs, for simplicity. Or arrange other talent in advance.
- Apply the lessons we learned from our Digital Storytelling production.
- Work in teams of 2 or 3, each taking turns operating the camera for the other.

11:00AM: Break**11:05AM: Camera Training 1**

This is the first time Fellows will touch our cameras, here are the most important parts to learn.

- Safety during camera use (wires, vision, tripods)
- Fragile and expensive parts (lens, diopter, tape compartment, viewscreen.)
- Powering up the camera
- Inserting tapes
- Easy button recording

11:45AM: Camera Exercise

This is a learn-by-doing exercise. With your introduction to these cameras, complete the sample shot list below. Each shot should be exactly 10 seconds long and meet the requirements as listed. Shoot to impress your classmates, innovate.

- A shot of scenery where the camera doesn't move, but the scenery does.
- A shot of someone or something leaving an outdoor space and entering an indoor space.
- A "head and shoulders" type shot where a person speaks directly to the camera.
- A close up shot of some detail that people don't normally notice.

12:30PM: Review of Test Recordings

Use about 20 minutes of time to review tapes and talk about experiences.

12:55PM: Homework assignments

- Communicate with bosses about best message for PSA.
- Develop and write scripts, read and rewrite too.
- Develop 4-6 shot storyboard with as much detail as possible.
- Organize talent for 4/3 morning shoot if possible.

This is a Message: 4/3/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Learn basics of audio recording in morning micro session, send fellows out to recording sessions when ready.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:15AM: Camera Training 2 – Audio Recording

Covering the basics of connecting lav microphones and getting good results.

- Safety during camera use (mic cables, etc)
- Fragile and expensive parts (mic cables again,
- Audio recording theory, sound waves, distance to source, etc.
- Microphone signal flow, power, audio channels
- Audio levels, how high is too high, wearing headphones
- Disguising the lav microphones with nice loops and stuff.

10:00AM: Production Time!

Fellows are sent off into the wild to record their PSAs in pairs, when ready.

12:45AM: Equipment return

Fellows return equipment and wrap up.

This is a Message: 4/10/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Begin editing PSA pieces with Final Cut Pro.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:15AM: Final Cut Pro Training – Video Capture

Fellows are working with digital video cassette for the first time in FCP, there are some things they have to learn to move forward.

- Capture theory, how does this work, anyway?
- Connecting cameras and capture devices to FCP
- Setting scratch disks, choosing capture source
- Shuttling tape, noting time code
- "Capture now!"
- Best practices for capturing media, sneaky tricks.

10:15AM: Production Time!

Fellows are sent off into the wild to record their PSAs in pairs, when ready.

12:45AM: Equipment return

Fellows return equipment and wrap up. Fellows should make appointments to finish editing if necessary, several of the fellows will have to do this.

Digital Media Distribution: 4/17/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Discuss the popular methods of sharing, linking, distributing digital works using existing "web 2.0" services and companies.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:15AM: Information Superhighway to Web 2.0 to Semantic Web?

Wikipedia says: "Web 2.0 is a perceived or proposed second generation of the web. This is where online services include interactivity, self-publishing, ownership of content, social applications, etc, that increase the involvement and flexibility of user experience on the Internet."

Before diving in, ask yourself a couple of questions:

- Is getting on the web part of your plan?
- Why do you need an online presence?
- What will online content do for your audience?
- What experience do you want visitors to have?
- What are your strengths going into this project?
- How much time do you intend to dedicate to this project?
- How much can you afford to spend on this project?

What is the difference between:

Blogs, vlogs, feeds, podcasts, streams, etc? What does it all mean?

9:30AM: Blogging

The fastest and easiest door to the web

Short for "Web log," a specialized site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences. Blogs with political or current-events themes have grown in popularity and become "soap boxes" for instant mass-audience commentary.

Take a look at some popular blogs:

Community Oriented Blogs:

- Kathy Podgers: <http://fromtheport.blogspot.com>
- Andrew Sinclair: <http://andrewsinclair.org>
- Gnome Blog: <http://www.freerangegnomes.blogspot.com>

Sort of “not so much” Blogs:

- Chronicle: <http://blogs.townonline.com/cambridge>
- WickedLocal: <http://home.wickedlocal.com>

How to start your own blog really really fast:

- www.cctvcambridge.org
Our own CCTV website can help you start your own blog, in really simple terms.
- www.blogspot.com
This site lets you punch in a few details and then gets you started blogging in under five minutes. A great starting point if you are aren't familiar with blogs yet.
- www.wordpress.com
A more advanced personal blog site that gives you more control over your presentation.

10:00AM: Digital Photography Sharing

So you are lacking photos in your blog work? How to start a personal photo journal using Flickr.

- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/superhead>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/theoregonian>

10:30AM: Digital Video Sharing

Ready to do high quality video postings? Lets try Blip.tv

- <http://make.blip.tv>
- <http://womenofwarcraft.blip.tv>
- <http://cctvcambridge.blip.tv>

Ask me why I'm not teaching Youtube? YouTube is owned by Google, and Google has unclear policies about how they store and use your content and personal information. We like to recommend services where the policies on how a company promises to use your content are good (ie. They don't use it for commercial advertising without your permission, won't re-edit

and relicense without your permission, etc).

11:30AM: Audience!

Yeah, don't forget about those people. They are pretty important. Some universal tips for developing and maintaining an audience regardless of what kind of media you make on the web:

Be patient.

Think about what makes you different.

What do others say about you?

What advantages do you have?

How can you emphasize these advantages and differences?

How will your target audience respond to a certain identity

Remember your goals - make sure it fits!

12:00PM: Class Wrap-up: Questions, evaluations, closure.

Live Events and Org Profiles: 5/1/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Reflect on the recently finished PSA production unit. Discuss the technique and considerations of recording live events for your agencies from production planning to transportation to recording techniques. The second half of the class will introduce the final assignment of the fellowship, the Organizational Profile, intended as an example marketing video production exercise.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:15AM: PSA Wrap up and reflection

Screening the (so far) finished PSA pieces and discuss the lessons learned.

Conceptual lessons:

1. Did your PSA meet its goals?
2. Did your messages come out as clear as you intended?
3. Did your scope creep?

Technical lessons:

1. Reflections on first time shooting with cameras?
2. First time working with actors?
3. First time editing digital video?

9:45AM: Live Event Coverage

“Live” doesn't mean you don't have to write anything!

All of the steps of the creative process should be applied to recording live events, from setting goals from the finished production to planning how to deliver the finished work to your target audience. We know the questions already:

- Is this event going to support your work?
- Why record a live event?
- What are the goals for the finished work?

- Who is the target audience?
- How do we record the event to be most effective in reaching the audience?
- Is video the best way to do it?

Planning non-technical resources

This includes everything from getting permission from the location or venue to arranging transportation to and from the recording, etc. Here are the things you need to consider before talking about production equipment.

1. Confirm date and time of event, schedule arrival time early enough to set up
2. Confirm location, permission to be at location, permission to record at location
3. Confirm access, opening times, schedule for location
4. Scout the location for quality of lighting, visibility obstructions, noise level, power.
5. Get releases from speakers, presenters, performers, etc.
6. Are there children performing?
7. Plan for production help, assistants, volunteers, interns, etc, to work with you.

Planning production gear

Planning the right gear based on your research of the space and subject is the next step.

4. Camera or cameras
5. Best choices for audio equipment? Is there a PA system, audio tech, concert staff present? Will they cooperate with you? Will you be all on your own?
6. What is the best kind of lighting equipment? Is the space lighted for performance? Is there crappy lighting? Is it mixed lighting (florescence vs incandescence vs natural)?
7. Plan out accessories and expendables like tape stock, disks, adhesive tape, extension cables, power cables, audio cables, etc.
8. Plan for transportation to and from. Is there a convenient loading dock or drop off point at the venue?

10:15AM: Choosing an approach for live recording

See an example of two (or three) (or four) and critique goals, location, gear, style, talent, shots, etc.

1. Gubernatorial Forum on the Environment
2. Handel's Messiah
3. Joyful Noise
4. Riversing

11:00AM: Organizational Profile Production

The assignment

You will produce a 3-5 minute “profile” of your organization or agency in an interview format. It is recommended that you target and focus on not more than three aspects of your agency (up to three programs, three services, etc). Choose the aspects that are most representative of the mission of your organization.

How is this different than the PSA production?

The PSA was about capturing the attention of people who do not yet have relationships with, knowledge of, or interest in your organization. The profile is intended for people on the other side of those lines.

Intended for invested parties like:

1. New constituents
2. Prospective constituents
3. Board, staff, volunteers
4. Funders and potentials
5. May have general audience appeal but this is not the primary purpose.

What format or style could an organizational profile take on?

Selecting a purpose within these contexts is imperative

An alternative to script writing

An interview-style production introduces new challenges for Fellows for working with “talent”. Documentary production requires drawing out text and dialogue from people in the know – it’s not easy. You may have already experienced this in your PSA production.

Writing exercises:

Composing questions for an interview is an art, but let’s try it out.

1. Visualize a candidate from your agency who is great at presenting about your agency, someone who is comfortable speaking to the public and is capable of speaking “off the cuff”. Now visualize one aspect of your organization, one program, one service. Take five minutes now to write questions that will engage this individual in discussion in a way that will help inform an impartial listener about your agency.
2. Based on these questions and potential answers, make a descriptive list of video or images that you may record that may inform viewers further on the context of this interview.

Expectations, Deadlines, Work Ethic

- This is the final stretch of this fellowship program. We expect that you'll put in extra hours.
- There is a public screening to serve as our deadline on May 21 at 7PM, your bosses will be there.
- I've set aside extra work time in the next two weeks for me to help you.

Org Profile Development: 5/8/2009 9AM-1PM

Today's Goals

Develop and plan the final production of the fellowship program, including development and critique of the profile goals, approach, and interview techniques. Production planning and scheduling should also be done today.

9:00AM: Morning Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

9:30AM: Review/Critique Interview questions and scripts

Fellows will use some of the class time to discuss with each other the plans for producing their organizational profile.

10:00AM: Interview production tips

Fellows will get a demonstration on setting up interview camera angles, "rule of thirds", sight lines and camera altitude, the use and abuse of natural lighting, and discuss some strategies for asking interview questions. This will also serve as a good time to troubleshoot past camera experiences and review camera usage in general.

11:00AM: Final production scheduling

Fellows will take time to plan and schedule production time for remote shoots and editing. It can't be stressed enough how important the budgeting of time is when it comes to longer format productions.

11:30AM: Misc work time, if needed

From this time forward, fellows are scheduling their own time for production and editing, hopefully built into their daily work schedules as allowed by their supervisors. Supervisors know these next two weeks will be busy and will be sensitive to their workloads.

Program Wrap: 5/21/2009 3PM-5PM

Today's Goals

Wrap up the experience from the last production module and critique lessons learned throughout the program.

3:00PM: Check In & Housekeeping

- Unfinished business?
- What's new?

3:15PM: Reflection on Organizational Profile Production

Let's spend a little time reviewing the organizational profile experience.

- What were your reactions to the finished pieces?
- What were the reactions of other people?

Looking back on this profile experience, what lessons have we learned from...

- Writing and storyboarding experience?
- Developing interview questions and tactics?
- Recording and collecting b-roll and other illustrative shots?
- Surprises we encountered in the edit room?
- How the final product reflects on the original goals and plans?

What were the production skills we learned?

- Working with people! (Your supervisors, your talent?)
- Managing production schedules and deadlines! How much time did it really take?
- Structuring your "story" using another person's dialog

3:45PM: Reflection on Media Fellowship Experience

This is an open discussion on the fellows' experience participating in this program. The goal here is to draw out and discuss the goals of the program and the relative success of those goals at the end. For this, we'll use some of the program orientation goals and questions to prompt the discussion:

Why did CCTV offer this program?

- CCTV is in the business of training and empowering communities.
- We already offer a million dollars of gear. How can we get more people using it?
- Organizations could be providing media services for themselves (with our help).
- Organizations could do it better if we could demystify the goals and process.
- We expect organizations to leverage these newly trained fellows to build sustainable media practices in their operations.

The Fellowship’s “Highly marketable” goals:

- Gain skills to produce effective digital media for television and the internet
- Gain skills in media project and resource management skills
- Produce several finished video pieces for your organization
- Learn the creative process, critical thinking, and critiquing skills
- Learn methods for conceptualizing, evaluating, and realizing media projects
- Form relationships with other media-oriented professionals and share experiences

The fellows will have a short time to complete some simple surveys of their confidence in using technology and level of skill in production. The form is identical to the skills assessment form they filled out on the orientation day.

The evaluation of the program comes later in a program exit interview done by phone. It is at this time that we collect anecdotal information about the progress and learning of the fellows, the success of the goals, their experience with the program and their relationship with their instructor.

4:30PM: Continuing your relationship with CCTV

Cambridge Community Television’s primary goal is helping people produce their own media, and we’ve been doing that for 20 years. Your organizations already have memberships here at CCTV which means that you (as representatives of your organizations) have access to all of our services. Here are the things that CCTV will continue to do:

- CCTV will continue to provide free access to our equipment and resources to member organizations to produce additional media.
- CCTV will provide access to further training opportunities through classes and workshops, all members are eligible to enroll in our classes.
- CCTV will maintain a mentor/mentee role with the fellows and their organizations beyond the program as needed.

5:00PM: Screening Setup

Set up chairs, projector, pre-adjust audio for screening.

7:00PM: Screening of Final works

Pieces will include all finished PSA productions and Organizational Profile productions.

8:00PM: Screening Finishes, Final Words, Program End