Chapter 1: Welcome to CCTV’s Video Workshops

Welcome

Welcome to Cambridge Community Television’s video training workshops. Our intent in these workshops is to give you a solid background in basic video production and then to set you loose to create your own programming for CCTV’s channels.

Some of you may find that the workshops are too brief; others may feel that they are too long. If you need additional time to practice, please feel free to call in during the designated call-in times to schedule time for you to practice.

Each workshop has a specific set of goals, which the instructor will outline at the first session. Generally speaking, these workshops will certify you to use certain pieces of equipment in the production of your shows, and enable you to enroll in more advanced courses in that subject area. If you feel that your previous experience qualifies you to start with more advanced workshops, feel free to ask the staff about “testing” out of specific workshops.

Certification is dependent upon attendance in all sessions of a workshop, and often upon the successful completion of a proficiency test.

PLEASE NOTE: If you fail to attend any one session of a workshop, you will be required to take the entire workshop again. So, please do not enroll in workshops for which you cannot attend all of the sessions.

About this Manual

This manual is one of several that CCTV makes available to interested students, and builds on topics discussed in the first book, CCTV’s Green Book on Fundamentals.

All of the books are designed to serve as trainer’s manuals for the video production workshops offered at CCTV. This means that most of the topics covered in these manuals will be talked about during workshops; for this reason, purchasing and reading these manuals is strictly optional, and is not a requirement for classroom success.

At the same time, many students say they benefit from reading these manuals: Some like to read up on a subject before each class so they feel ahead of the game during classtime; others like to read the manuals afterwards as a form of review. Please feel free to use them as you like, or not to use them at all!

CCTV also gives you the option of borrowing any manual for two weeks by leaving a refundable deposit; you have our permission to photocopy any pages you want to keep for yourself.
What to Expect

CCTV’s Green Book on Fundamentals offers a good introduction of how Public Access Cable TV and Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) came into being, what we’re all about, how and why Public Access TV differs from broadcast television, and what you should expect when you watch Public Access. We’re not going to repeat that discussion here.

We are going to review that book’s discussion of what you should expect when you decide to take CCTV’s video courses and get involved in producing programs for the Cambridge community. CCTV functions as a community center where people from all walks of life, with all sorts of interests and viewpoints and agendas, and having all sorts of educational backgrounds and ethnic origins, come to do their thing. At CCTV, you are very likely - and, in fact, encouraged - to be working side-by-side with people whose life experiences are completely different from your own.

People come to CCTV for a variety of reasons: To learn how to get their message across through electronic media (TV and computers), to do a media project for their organization, to pursue a possible career interest, to try something new, to hang out with their friends or to meet new ones, and many others. CCTV can accommodate all of these interests, and more. It may help you, though, to think for a minute what it will take for you to find fulfillment at CCTV.

Tips for Success in Access

Public Access Television is different from commercial television in almost every respect, except perhaps for the viewers’ expectations. Believe it or not, as a public access producer, you have tremendously more freedom to do what you want than do commercial TV producers. Whereas success for them is easy to define (the amount of money the program attracts in commercial sponsorship and the number of viewers who watch), you have the freedom to define your own yardstick for success.

For some producers this is the hardest thing to do: To define what it is they are trying to accomplish, figure out how to accomplish it, and then determine how successful they were. (Boy, the ratings game makes it so much easier for the commercial TV producers, doesn’t it?)

Given that there are so many reasons why people come to CCTV and so many ways to measure to success, offering tips for success may seem like a questionable exercise. But our experience indicates that beginning producers tend to make many of the same mistakes, and often are grateful for any advance warning of issues to watch out for. So here goes:
Classroom Tips

- **Come to class on time and alert.** We attempt to cover a lot of material in a short period of time, and though we try not to overwhelm you, it is easy to become overwhelmed if you come to class late, hungry, and exhausted.

- **Speak right up, ask questions!** These workshops are for you. If you don’t understand something, let the instructor know right away. Otherwise, you are apt to continue to fixate on what you missed and miss the next topic, too.

- **Step right up, use the equipment!** One of the best ways to learn how to use equipment is to use it. When the instructor invites you to use the equipment, or to practice an exercise, don’t be shy! The more hands-on experience you get in class, the more comfortable you’ll feel about using the equipment once the workshop is over.

- **Recognize that making television is an exercise that has technical, social, and creative dimensions.** You will likely find some aspects easier to grasp than others. It is also likely that other people in your workshop will master certain aspects faster than you will. All of this is natural. Keep at it, and you will discover things you enjoy doing and are good at, things you are not good at and have no interest in, and other things that you will want to master over time.

When You’re Starting Out

- **Jump right in!** Don’t wait until you’re an expert before you do a show. The best way to learn is to do. Once the workshop is over, take out a contract to produce your own show. Or volunteer to help someone out with their show. Do anything.

- **Get involved in a production as soon as possible after the course ends.** Don’t wait months before you put your classroom knowledge to work; by then, you’ll feel like you’ve forgotten half of it and be much less eager to try.

- **Don’t be too picky about what type of show you volunteer with.** At this point, you need two things: 1) Practice time, and 2) A sense of your options. You need practice using the equipment, and you would like to understand what kinds of shows are out there, what kinds of production environments you like working in, who you like to work with, etc. Being picky when you are just starting out robs you of this critical experience and perspective.

- **Don’t feel that you need to take all sorts of courses before you start crewing.** CCTV offers a lot of courses to help you understand how to use all the equipment in the facility; but you’re not likely to need all this equipment for any given project. You don’t need to know everything about television to create a successful program. And even if you’re someone who has to know everything about a subject, pace
yourself; you can only learn in stages, and you’ll retain more if you put your knowledge into practice at each step of the way.

**Production Tips**

- **Define your goals.** You’ll read more about this in Chapter 2.
- **Treat everyone as a valuable asset, and remember that they are volunteers.** Many types of television productions, especially multi-camera remote shoots and in-Studio productions, require a large technical crew. Experienced producers know how much time and energy is spent recruiting and bringing up to speed a large crew of people. They also recognize that, in an Access environment like CCTV, all of these people are volunteering their time, and don’t have to be there if they don’t want to be. If you treat your crew well, involve them in decision-making, thank them and reward them for their efforts (food usually works well!), they will be there for you. If you don’t, you’ll constantly be starting over at square one, looking for crew.
- **Treat other producers with the courtesy you’d like to enjoy.** At the very least, keep in mind that you might have to call on them to be your crew sometime.
- **Treat the equipment and the facility as a valuable asset.** There are few things more annoying than broken equipment or a disorganized environment. Do your part to keep CCTV a fun place to be, and let staff know right away if there are any equipment, facility, or other problems.

Remember that the point of all of this is to learn a new means of expression, and to have fun! If you have any questions or problems, feel free to ask the staff.
Steps for Producing a Show at CCTV and Getting it Cablecast

ATTEND THE CCTV ORIENTATION. Every month CCTV offers a free Orientation for anyone who wants to learn about CCTV and how they can get involved. Attendance is required before being allowed to enroll in CCTV production courses. No pre-registration is necessary. All are welcome. Call 661-6900 to find out the date of the next Orientation.

BECOME A CCTV MEMBER. If after the Orientation you decide you want to get involved with CCTV, you need to pay an Annual Membership Fee to become a CCTV Member. Fees vary depending upon the Membership category you select (Individual, Organizational, Senior, Youth), and whether you want privileges to use the Video facilities, the Computer facilities, or both. You must be a Member before you can enroll in workshops.

COMPLETE THE REQUIRED COURSES. CCTV offers a wide selection of production workshops, from beginning through advanced, to help you develop the knowledge and skills to successfully complete your program and have a good time doing it. Each workshop will “certify” you to use certain pieces of equipment and/or facilities within CCTV. New producers who want to work on programs in the field (i.e. away from CCTV) generally need to complete 3 workshops: Fundamentals, Beginning Field, and Beginning Editing. Following this, they need to shoot and edit their first production, a 3-minute certification tape, following the steps outlined on this sheet. New producers who want to work on programs using CCTV’s big studio need to complete the Fundamentals and Beginning Studio workshops to crew in the Studio, and follow up with the Intermediate and Advanced workshops to use the Control Room equipment.

SUBMIT A PROGRAM PRODUCTION CONTRACT, available at the front desk, at least one week prior to calling to reserve equipment. The contracts are color-coded: Gold for certification tapes, pink for single programs, blue for series programs, and green for non-resident contracts. (Non-resident contracts must be approved by the Organization’s contact person.) Within five business days, CCTV will notify you that your contract has been approved, and give you a contract number. Memorize this number or write it in your wallet, but don’t lose it, because you will need it shortly!

PLAN YOUR PRODUCTION. Line up your talent and crew, think about what your goals are and the best way to get your message across. Do all of the planning you learned about in the Production Planning workshop.

CALL CCTV TO RESERVE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY TIME. You must have your contract number in order to reserve the facilities, and you may only call in during the designated call-in hours.

USE THE EQUIPMENT AND FACILITY TIME. The demand is high and the supply low for CCTV’s facilities and equipment, so it is vital that you be prompt in showing up for your reserved time. Failure to do so may result in a warning and forfeiture of your equipment to another user. If you wish to
cancel a reservation, please give CCTV 24-hour advance notice. Field equipment may be checked in and out only during the designated hours.

**Check in/out**  12:00 - 6:00 pm  **Monday through Thursday**  
**Hours:**  12:00 - 5:30 pm  **Friday**  
            4:00 – 8:00 pm  **Sunday**

**PREPARE YOUR TAPE PROPERLY.** In order to work with our automated cablecast system, your tape must be prepared exactly as follows: Use the first 60 seconds of the videotape to record 30 seconds of black, followed by 20 seconds of color bars and tone, followed by a 10-second countdown with the last two seconds black before your program starts. If your program is less than 30 minutes long, ask CCTV for a reel of PSA's from which to choose filler material to round out the full 30-minute time slot. Then add another minute of black at the end of your show. Clearly label the tape and its box before you submit the program. Include the program title, producer’s name, EXACT running time, and in cue and out cues. See the illustration at the end of this Chapter for details.

**FILL OUT A CABLECAST REQUEST FORM** when your program is finished. Submit this form, along with a copy of your program, to CCTV’s Programming Coordinator. You will receive notification in the mail as to when your program will be shown on CCTV.

**PUBLICIZE YOUR PROGRAM.** Tell all your friends, send a press release to the media, post flyers around town, send a special letter and flyer to the audiences you’re trying to reach letting them know when the program will be cablecast, organize a group screening and discussion. After all, you want people to see your program, don’t you?

**PICK UP YOUR TAPE AND DO IT AGAIN!** Congratulations on finishing your program. Ready to do another one? Or do you want to take more courses first? Don’t forget to contact CCTV’s Programming Coordinator to find out when CCTV is finished cablecasting your program. You can arrange to pick up your tape after that.
CCTV’s Equipment Use Policies - Field Equipment

**EQUIPMENT CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT HOURS.** Field equipment may be checked in and out only during the designated hours. If you wish to cancel a reservation, please give CCTV 24-hour advance notice. Failure to do so may result in a warning and forfeiture of your equipment to another user.

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**LIMITS ON FREE USE OF EQUIPMENT.** Free equipment use is available only for programs that are not receiving any compensation and that have no significant uses other than cablecast on CCTV’s Public Access channels.

**Certification Tapes:**
- Field gear: Limited to 2 uses per program
- Editing: Limited to 10 hours per program

**Single or Series Program:**
- Field gear: Limited to 4 uses (up to 24 hours each) per program, with… only 2 per week
- Editing: Limited to 40 hours per program, with… only 10 per week, and 20 total in prime time slots

**All Programs:**
- **PRIME TIME** usage for all facilities and equipment is limited to no more than 2 prime time slots per week and/or 2 consecutive weekly prime time slots. This is to insure a fair distribution of all facilities.
- **EDITING SLOTS** may be booked for up to five hours at a time.
- **PORTABLE EQUIPMENT:** A single use is defined as any portion of a day, up to 24 hours (e.g., equipment checked out Monday at 5:00 p.m. and returned Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.). Equipment checked out for more than 24 hours constitutes additional uses. Use of the Remote Studio constitutes one Studio and one Portable use.
HOW TO LABEL A TAPE

1. Label Side of Tape with TITLE and RUNNING TIME

2. Label Top of tape with
   TITLE: Name of the Show
   PRODUCER: Name of the Producer(s)
   IN CUE: What's right before the show starts (usually a countdown)
   OUT CUE: How the show ends (usually black or bars) or end credits...
   RUNNING TIME: How long your program is. PLEASE TIME YOUR SHOWS in the Edit Room to get accurate time!

3. Label Front and Side of Box the same way. With CCTV tapes you can use the paper insert.

If your tape is part of a SERIES, be sure to include the EPISODE NUMBER every time you write the title!

ALL TAPES MUST BE LABELED PROPERLY! (INCLUDING CERTIFICATION TAPES)