

ENJOYING VISUAL TECHNOLOGY

**SYDNEY VIDEO
MAKERS CLUB**



ELECTRONIC EYE

N E W S L E T T E R

2009

March 2009

- 2-5 Through the Presidents Lens**
- 6-7 March Focus Night**
- 8-10 Advanced Tips For Editing**
- 11-15 Editing**



**Next meeting
Wednesday
25th March**

www.ncc.asn.au



Through the President's Lens

Bring in your old clips!

We have been fortunate to have witnessed some outstanding short films over the years, films made by members past and present and some were very funny.

We never kept those at the club due to storage problems but now that we have a good librarian in John Maher we can rediscover the funny ones and re-screen as you help us find them. Archiving such good productions serves as a “back-stop” to ensure that standards don’t slip.

I recall seeing a funny one about a family sitting around their dinner table having a meal when they get a phone call from a sales guy disrupting the evening, a family member then puts the caller on “hold” while they resume their meal! Who was the clever member responsible for that laughter? Let me know as I’d like us to see more of the stuff that moved our emotions rather than just inform us.

You can still buy our VOTY DVD from kent which has a variety of styles, it is particularly good for members who want to start making films with emotion, I note in Particular the “Dragon abreast” film By

Doldissen & Saville That dealt with the Big C topic in which the founder of the breast cancer support group dies the night before the shoot, not a dry eye in the big theatre.

I also made a documentary about a 92 y.o. Ausie digger and his lovely bride in which I allowed him to be the comic, you can see it by typing Alfie war on YouTube.

Comedy: This year we would like 2009 to be gloom-free year at SVM, so I made two new and very funny comedy films of 3 minutes each, these made my wife roll with laughter (and she normally is very reserved!). We will screen those for your enjoyment in the first half of the year so don't you dare miss any club nights as we will spring them on you when you least expect it !

“Gran Torino” is the latest Eastwood flick I saw, in which he made us laugh, cry, and then feel angry as Clint returns to the type of character that made him famous in the 70's.

In this movie I saw a lot of Jack Feldstein's principles on script writing, Jack is the industry strength movie

maker who last month talked about his film work for international productions, Jack also showed us the DVD he made which disambiguates the secrets of script editing.

I believe that his DVD on the subject was concise particularly for people with little time on their hands. It is on sale so email us if you'd like a copy.



March “Focus” night

Making good movies is a two stage process; the technical and the creative, the former was well catered for with over 30 attending and being looked after by 10 mentors.

With as many laptops and Cameras Scotty punctuated his lecture with carefully chosen clips he had shot OS. I was encouraged with the response to his well prepared hands-on humorous style as apparently “A lot was learnt” on the night, Well done Scotty.

March Club Night

March 25th is our regular club night The other part of making movies is the creative process and we are delighted to bring to you someone that can do both, our special guest **Kate Rees Davies**.



Born in the UK, Kate came to Sydney to study and work in the film industry at NIDA she is also involved in filmmaking. She has just finished her first short film “Enlightened” and is in post production on her second short called Missing Link,

At the end of 2008 she wrote a 120 page feature screenplay and has already generated interest in the USA market, talk about busy!

Kate has worked as a crew member on several short films for Screen Australia. She has a few other short scripts that she hopes to develop before the year is out. She is also the membership Manager for Women in Film & Television- NSW.

She will inspire you with her ability to pull people together like a magnet and get them involved in the production process, She will show us a bit from Tropfest before she flies to LA on movie business so come and say hello to the next Oscar winner.

And don't forget that our John has sound effects disks in our library that you can borrow and drag into your home movies and easily impress the viewer.



I am expecting that our more experienced members will be impressed by the new crop of films at VOTY 09, why not attempt more comedy yourself this year to brighten up the world? To make people laugh is a noble thing.

Rob Nercessian
Club President

Sydney Video Makers Club Formal Documents

We have altered the old NCC documents to incorporate the new name, and there are a few changes to the Screening Procedures, particularly:

5.2.2 Awards

“A maximum of three individual awards may be granted to the team members identified on the Entry Form.” (used to be only one).

5.2.3 Certificates

For a winning video where an award is granted to team or joint entrant a certificated will be granted to each participating member . (new clause).

There are other minor wording changes.
You can find the new documents on the Website.

Kent Fry
Secretary

FOCUS NIGHTS

“LAPTOPS AT THE READY”

Tuesday 10 March was our second entry level tutorial night. Folks brought laptops along to join in with a bit of hands on. Attendance response was good and about thirty five brave souls turned up to join in the fun and learning. As seen in the photographs a lot of brainpower was at work getting to grips with the material in hand. Scotty was session leader with the subjects for the night “Getting connected”, “Camera handling” and “Shot composition”.

Enthusiasm level was high and by the end of the evening those who brought cameras along, which meant almost everyone, had mastered how to connect up to the computer and down load some video. On this occasion we were all using Windows Video Maker as the editor to avoid confusion using various editor types in the one session. Anyhow WMM is a freebie with windows XL or Vista and that appealed to Scotty’s ethnic genes. We did notice a couple of Mac’s sneak in using I Movie, we let them stay as they promised not to make any noise! Kent Fry our HD expert and enthusiast helped to sort out some HD connection and down load



problems and passed on some hints about shareware codecs that can be down loaded to assist with handling some particular HD file formats.

After a cuppa, thanks to Margaret, it was back into it and a bit more hands on practice with framing up shots and capturing MCU, CU and



ECU shots. A bit more discussion about “organising what to shoot” and the night was almost over. A simple exercise was set in readiness for the next session on editing basics. At that next session we will be assembling a one min video from the material participants shoot in the intervening period. Subjects for shooting.

“how to boil an egg”, “how to make toast” or “How to make a cup of tea”. Easy subjects which still allow for plenty of shot angle, type (CU,LS etc),good framing and composition..Remember to keep your fingers off the Zoom button when filming!

The setup of the craft room for the session although full to capacity worked quite well and we will be using that format again, except that we will add a couple more work tables to include the Mac's. We will arrange for two (2) of the Mentors to be Mac oriented. At the other six(6) work tables can work with Pinnacle Studio or Movie Maker. So come along early and help with setup and get yourself into a position that best suits your needs for learning.

If you have any suggestions for improving the sessions let Scotty know by E-Mail.

My special thanks to all the Mentors who brought their precious laptops along and let other folk "play with them". Your mentoring assistance is also very much appreciated as it maintains the flow of the session and avoids individual queries from impacting on the entire group. I could not have achieved what we did without you. I really hope you can assist me at future sessions.it will make all the difference.

Many thanks Scotty

Ian Scott

Vice President SVM Club.



ADVANCED TIPS FOR EDITING

by Ernest Cheung

One of the differences between good movie editing and an ordinary one is in the “structure of the sequence”. In another words, what the viewer knows and when.

EXAMPLE ONE

In a simple story telling arrangement, the events of the story are just laid out in a chronological order. Our scene takes place in the woods. Jane, a young girl is looking for her older brother Harry.



Shot A:

Jane enters the woods.

Audience Question: Where is Harry ?



Shot B:

Jane stops short a few yards from a clearing.

New Question: What has she found ?



Shot C:

Harry and a girl are kissing passionately

Answer: Jane has found her brother.

This is a straight forward question and answer editing pattern by most amateurs. Very ordinary.

EXAMPLE TWO

In this example, we change the structure of sequence so that shot C becomes an answer to shot A and simultaneously raises a new question. It is more interesting.



Shot A:

Jane enters the woods.

Question: Where is Harry ?



Shot C:

Harry and a girl are kissing passionately.

Answer: Harry is here.

New question for audience: Will Jane find him ?



Shot B:

Jane stops short a few yards from the clearing.

Answer: Jane has found him.

Now if we were to prolong the time before Jane's arrival in Shot B, the viewer would share a secret with the director by knowing that Harry is nearby in an embarrassing situation. This editing pattern places an answer before the question, thereby creating suspense. All we did is by changing the order of the shots in the editing.

continued...

EXAMPLE THREE

This is what Hitchcock would do.



Shot C



Shot A:



Shot B:

By revealing Harry in a compromising situation in the opening shot, a suspenseful situation is established for the remainder of the scene. When Jane enters the woods in the second shot, the fuse is lit, and the audience know that a potentially embarrassing encounter is possible. Hitchcock frequently sets up a scene this way by placing the audience in a privileged and uncomfortable position by providing them with information that the protagonist desperately needs but cannot obtain.

Reference: Film Directing by Steven Katz

Editing

by Kent Fry

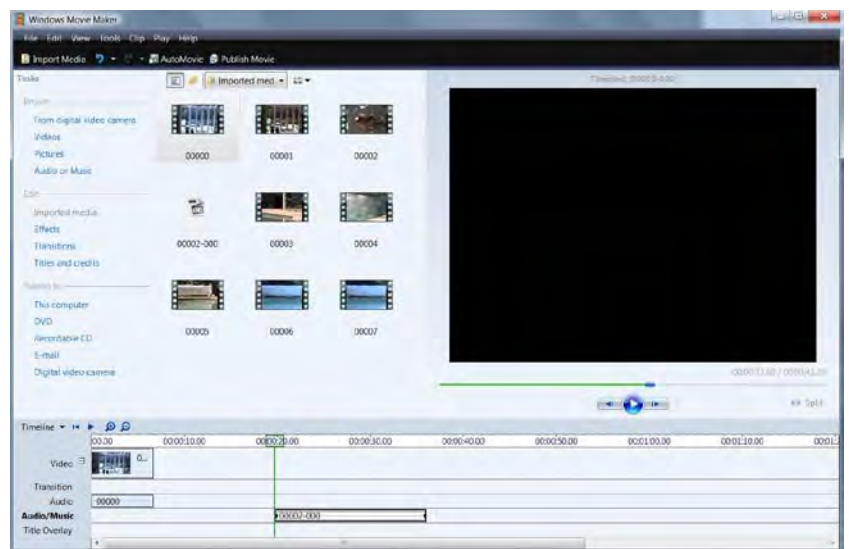
Background

The first question to ask is why bother editing at all?

The answer is that you are not satisfied with the raw video you have shot and you want to do something with it. If you are satisfied, just burn it onto a DVD and do something else.

The objective of editing is to turn your raw video footage into a story that you and, more importantly, others, will be prepared to watch. These days editing is done on a computer with one of more than a dozen possible editing programs. They are collectively called non-linear editors or NLEs. This article will refer to Windows Video Maker, the simplest PC-based editor. It is free. Once you have mastered Windows Video Maker, you are likely to want to move to something a bit more sophisticated, but make sure you have mastered it first.

Non linear editors have three major parts. A place or bin to keep the clips, stills, audio and titles that you will use. A timeline and sub timelines onto which you will put the clips, audio and titles to form your story and a preview or monitor window to allow you to review what you have produced on the timeline.



The clips, which can usually be in any format that your computer can interpret, are initially brought into the clip bin. They are generally represented as a thumbnail. They are then dragged to the timeline to take part in your story. They can be shortened by dragging in each end. You can usually create a still from any part of the clip or even freeze the first or last frame for any duration you want.

Most of us start with travel or family videos. The footage was taken during an event, such as a trip or a birthday celebration. You already know that all the footage you took is good because you have applied the rules of good video set out in the February Electronic Eye – no zooming and panning, hold the camera absolutely still, remember

the rule of thirds, take at least six seconds per shot, ensure that you have plenty of cutaways.

Edit Process

Step 1 – The Story Line

The event you have filmed has a natural sequence which provides the basis for your story. On the assumption you did not write a script and follow the script when you took your footage (most of us don't), the first step in editing is to nut out a rough story line. In a travel video it might be:

- went to the airport;
- flew to destination;
- bus trip around attractions;
- flew from destination to home.

Pretty boring. Now think about some highlights on the trip. Include the footage of the riot that was occurring as you were bussed out of the destination airport. What about the wife being chased by eager hawkers who want to flog her some local junk? Make features of bits that you found interesting, particularly of people doing stuff.

Step 2 – Bring Footage into Editing System

The next step is to get all the scenes that you want to use into your editing program. These appear as thumbnails in the clip bin. If you find that you don't have all the shots you would like, look on the internet or in Google Earth. You don't have to film going to the airport every time you go – you can use the footage from last year's trip if you like – only you will know until time causes you to forget. Bring in the still pictures that your partner took with their happy snappy. Bring in any separate audio you might have if, for instance, you used your minidisk recorder. You might also have some copyright free music you want to add.

Step 3 - The Timeline

This is where you assemble your story.

Your shots are all a minimum of six seconds. You will not want to use all of the video in your story. My rule of thumb is that a shot without significant action (such as a scenery shot) must last no more than 3 seconds, and usually only 2 seconds. Shots containing action (such as the wife's credit card being refused) must start and end with action. Every shot must advance the story. Shots of the travel guide giving a long winded explanation in badly accented English are boring. If you must have

the audio, put in cutaways every couple of seconds. Cut from the guide to what she is talking about and back again. Make it interesting. Note that you can use pictures from your still camera as cutaways.

All non linear editors have a lot of transitions available. By and large you should use transitions between clips sparingly. Most of the time you should use a straight cut in the picture. Only use a transition when it has meaning, for instance if you are changing place or time. A cross dissolve or a clock transition are all you really need. Just because they are there does not mean you have to use them. If they don't advance the story, don't use them.

Step 4 – Review

Now review the pictures and sound that tell your story. Change the length of clips if they don't seem right. Now review it again. Get the final story before the next two steps.

Step 5 - Voiceover

You will probably want to add a voiceover unless you religiously narrated the story as you shot it. Write a script, allowing two words per second of video. Go away into a quiet room and record the voiceover, with the pictures playing in your mind. You can record onto an audio recorder or into your video camera. Get the sound into your computer and video editor. Place it on a track called "Audio/Music".

Step 6 – Titles

Add titles where they are needed. Make sure that they last long enough for people to read, but don't leave them on forever. Put them on the "title overlay track", or put them directly on the timeline. You don't need a title on every clip. Use them in the same way you use transitions – sparingly.

Step 7 - Adding Music

Your copyright free background music is placed on the same track/timeline as your voiceover, so you can't have both at the same time.

Step 8 - Review

Play your story through. Are the sound levels right? If not, adjust the audio where necessary.

Step 9 - Render

Now is the time to make the video. This will create a completely new video on your hard drive, and you don't want to do it more than once. Use the "Publish To" section of Windows Movie Maker. Once you start, go and have a cup of tea. Depending on your computer which now has to create every frame of your video, it may take some time. When you come back, you have made your VOTY-winning video!

Some Technical Stuff

Computers:

Video cameras predominantly record the following file types:

Quality	Name	Codec	Medium	File suffix
Standard Definition	DV	DV	Tape, DVD	.avi
High Definition	HDV	MPEG2	Tape	.mpg
High Definition	AVCHD	MPEG4	Hard Drive Memory Card	.mts, .m2ts

None of the camera recording systems is uncompressed, that is, records all information from every pixel that the camera produces. Codecs (compressor decompressor) are used to compress the file in the camera and then decompress it in the computer editing system. The more compressed the file, the more difficult it is for your computer to edit it. The most highly compressed format, AVCHD, requires the fastest computer to edit satisfactorily. If you have Windows Vista, your computer should have a Windows Experience Index score of more than 4.

The slowest bit of your computer is the hard drive. Put your video on a hard drive different from your operating system and programs – ie, don't put your video on "C" drive. If that means getting an external hard drive, make sure that is quick, 7200 rpm, and if possible, Raid "0".

Editing Programs

The editing program does not alter the clips stored on your PC. It stores the titles, transition and cut information you have generated in a project file. The project file says "put a title at the beginning", or "put a fade transition between clip 2 and 3", or "only show the middle 3 seconds of clip number 25", and so on. When you finally finish your masterpiece, you must then render a new video from editor. The project

file tells the editor what bits of the original, unaltered clips to put where, and where to add in titles, transitions and audio, during this rendering process.

Get Audio from Video

If you want to strip out the audio from the video (for instance to get the travel guide giving a long winded explanation in badly accented English), drop the video on the “Audio/Music” track. This will save the audio as a separate Windows Media Audio file that can then be used as you wish. However, I could not make this work with AVCHD (MPEG4) files. It does work with AVI, WMV and MPEG2 files.

Happy video making!

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CLUB INFORMATION

SYDNEY VIDEO
MAKERS CLUB

www.ncc.asn.au

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Rob Nercessian

Vice President:
Ian Scott

Secretary:
Kent Fry

Treasurer:
Elvio Favalessa

The Club meets on the **FOURTH WEDNESDAY** of each month (except for November & December) at 8PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood. Tea & Coffee are available from 7PM. FOCUS nights, which usually cover technical subjects, are held on the **SECOND TUESDAY** of each month (except January & December) at 7.30PM at the Dougherty Centre, Victor Street, Chatswood.

NOTE: Normal cycle can vary to avoid public and school holidays. Check the current club diary on the club website for exact date information.

The Committee meets on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY** of each month. Members are always welcome to attend, and for meeting time and venue, see any committee member.

Member's guests may be invited to meetings; the first visit is free, subsequent visits are \$5. New members are always welcome. Annual membership is single \$56, self and spouse \$76, country member \$28 - with an initial joining fee of \$10.

Note: Equipment brought to a Club night is not covered by the Club's insurance. Members should study their household insurance and check whether their video equipment is covered away from their premises and consider whether their cover should be extended.

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