

Videos for Writers: How-To

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0. Foreword

- Who we are
- What we are
- What we do

0.0 Introduction



A video in the documentation is what the anecdote is to a social situation – an elegant introduction to a complex matter.

1. Why Videos?

- Videos save time by explaining complex processes quickly.
- Videos help content writers visualize complex and abstract concepts and situations. Viewers use more than one sense to perceive the video content.
- Videos act as a smooth introduction to a topic when compared to a wall of text. They are the “trailer” for your documentation.
- When they’re not part of the documentation, videos are currently one of the best means to promote your ideas.

Conclusion: Most users look for videos.

2. Popular Video Types

- Vlog/advertisement (i.e. short videos on Facebook)
- Tutorial/how-to/walkthrough videos
- Highlight videos
- Infographic videos

3. Nice2Have

- An **icebreaker** (don't get carried away though 😊)
- A CONSISTENT VISUAL STYLE...
Reuse graphics, images, and other already existing graphical elements to produce your videos.
- ... that's DIFFERENT from the competition!
- A permanently visible **link and/or QR code**
- **Thumbnails** and **screenshots** are always nice to have.

4. Organizational Suggestions

- Work in a small group of selected colleagues for productivity's sake.
- Make sure each member dedicates a small amount of their time to the project, and not just to expect results – *involve* them in the process.
Be proactive!
- Organize regular informal sync meetings to improve the video.
- Keep track of your video versions. Use a similar template:
<video_type>_<video_title>_<version> (Walkthrough_GetStarted_001)
- Don't delete older versions of your video. Make a retrospection and examine what went well and what went wrong, so that you improve future projects.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes, they are part of the “game”; don't let yourself be discouraged.

5. Tricks of the Trade (1): Video

- A video is **not a PowerPoint** presentation!
- Keep it **short and sweet** (as much as possible, depending on the video type).
- Make your video **appealing from the get-go**, but **don't overdo it** with too many effects and transitions.
- Learn to **adapt your creativity** to your organization's guidelines.
- Always **use the same settings and resolution** when recording, 1920x1080 is the standard. Also **use the same zoom for browsers**, so that you limit white spaces and make texts readable.

6. Tricks of the Trade (2): Audio

- **Audio is 50% of your video.** So record with good gear, in a quiet room, without ambient noise.
- **Always add a music track** – some videos do not require voiceover, so something must keep the pace.
- **Music + voiceover: tone down the music while the speaker is talking.** If possible, automate this using your software.
- **Mono: If your music and voiceover interfere** with each other – **disable stereo** on either.
- **Accessibility: if you have a voiceover, include subtitles (burned in) or provide them separately.**
- **If you're not confident in your voiceover skills** – ask a colleague! If you're not a native speaker, **consider outsourcing** that, too.

7. Tricks of the Trade (3): Images

- When showing a picture for more than 3 seconds, **add an animation** to make the scene look more dynamic. For example, you can slightly **change its size and position**.
- Make sure that the images and pictograms you use in the video are OK from a **legal** standpoint. Avoid using images with unclear copyrights. This goes for **music**, too.

Tip: If you're looking for royalty-free music online, you can use websites such as bensound.com or mobygratis.com. Don't forget to double-check their licensing section, though.

8. Tricks of the Trade (4): Interviews

- Always use the same camera position and lighting. Also, use the same software settings. If possible, use only artificial lighting to avoid sun glare and the effects caused by the movement of clouds.
- If possible, use 3-point lighting when recording people (like the pros do).
- When recording at home:
 - Use a flat background color. Don't sit at an angle to the wall (stay parallel).
 - Keep the microphone as close as possible to avoid echo and reverberation.
- Use icebreakers, ask open questions, don't interrupt your interviewee.
- Improvise some of the questions. Listen to the answers and respond – this yields great answers, and the interviewees show their best. Converse, don't just ask.
- Leave quiet spaces of 1-2 seconds before each question and answer.

9. Our Videos (Samples)

- [How-To](#)
- [Highlight](#)
- [Infographic](#)
- [Teaser](#)
- [Post on Facebook](#)
- [Vlog \(Interview\)](#)

10. Useful Sources of Information

- [Beginning Graphic Design: Fundamentals](#)
- [Beginning Graphic Design: Branding & Identity](#)
- [Beginning Graphic Design: Layout & Composition](#)
- [Beginning Graphic Design: Color](#)
- [Beginning Graphic Design: Images](#)
- [Beginning Graphic Design: Typography](#)
- [Download Inkscape](#)

/end: Thanks for your attention!

Ask away! 😊