Production Basics
UBC Media Makers

UBC Studios
When you start a live action production it is important to:

- Have a Clear Objective
- Know Your Audience

Based on these points you can begin to create a production plan. Don’t feel like you have to rush through. Take your time in the pre-production process.

1. Script & Storyboard

Before you write a script or storyboard it’s a great idea to brainstorm first.

Think about:
- Audience
- Telling a Story Visually
- A Creative Hook
- Conciseness (we recommend videos three-five minutes in length)

When you actually go to write your script make sure directions are clear for your actors and everything is properly formatted.

When you are ready to start storyboarding think about the visual aspect of storytelling and how you can use images instead of words to get your point across.

Interview Script Tip:
Write questions with bullets of answers you are hoping to receive to allow you to plan how long the comment will take.

* details of transcribing an interview in post-production section.
Candice Rideout gives a testimony about her collaboration with UBC Studios.

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| 1. Blue Sky Room| • Candice, UBC Studio staff member and a member of her own team surround table and look at their notes.  
• Staff member uses hand gestures to explain ideas.  
• Camera pans to the right. | Ultimately I wanted something that was clear effective, engaging for students. |
| 2. UBC Studios  | • Talking head of Candice.  
• She is positioned on the right side.  
• Grey background, she wears subdued solid colours. | That really did provide a learning opportunity that was perhaps beyond something that I would be able to create. |
 Date: March 15, 2015  
Length: 2-3 Minutes  
Draft #: 3  

**INSIDE UBC STUDIOS BLUE SKY ROOM**

Candice Rideout (V.O)

Ultimately I wanted something that was clear, effective, engaging for students.

*Candice leans over desk and consultes notes, UBC STAFF MEMBER makes hand gestures explaining ideas.*

**INSIDE UBC STUDIOS MAIN STUDIO**

Candice Rideout

*(gestures with hands)*

That really did provide a learning opportunity that was perhaps beyond something that I would be able to create.
Ultimately I wanted something that was clear, effective, engaging for students. That really did provide a learning opportunity that was perhaps beyond something that I would be able to create.
2. Budget & Plan

Budgeting is not just the monetary value associated with your project.

It is also how much time you will be spending on your project, what paid and unpaid resources you will be using, and what kind of spaces you will need.

Consider:

- Time - who’s time and how much?
- Space - do you need to coordinate with others to use the space? Do you have to pay a fee?
- Equipment - when do shared resources need to be booked? Do you need to rent?
- People - do you need help and how much? Do you need to pay them?
- Money - what is the dollar amount you will spend?

Necessary Steps:

1. Budget out the project. Make sure you have a clear outline of how you will budget equipment, talent and any other production costs.
2. Pick a date and location and make sure you fill out any necessary release forms.
3. Create a film schedule. Clearly write down when you will be filming which scenes, so on shoot day there will be no confusion.
4. Assemble your team. Book talent and crew for your project. Debrief with them and give clear instructions.

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Production can be an intimidating step in creating your video. By staying organized and through good preparation you will have your best chance at success!

Make sure you test your equipment before taking it out. Check to see if you have charged batteries, you have enough memory space and materials are safe to travel. Bring your script and storyboards to the shoot. As always, be patient and take your time.

Remember, everything takes longer than you think.

Think like an Editor:
Make sure you film thinking about how each shot will go together in the editing process so you can stay organized and on target.

3. Location Assessment

Before you film anywhere make sure you visit that location before hand. It is important to prepare for the right conditions, so try and visit around the time of day and day of the week you hope to film so you are not surprised. Pay attention to any background noise in the area.

Bring our printable location guide with you on any location scout!
Try visiting your location about a week before you are hoping to film, ideally at the same time of day your filming will take place. You can write down your answers to questions below for your future reference. Take pictures if possible.

Travel
a. how long does it take to get to your location?

b. How will you access the location at the time of shooting? Do you need special permission or access?

Visuals
a. What is the best time of day for optimal light?

b. Can you turn lights on and off, are there blinds or window to control daylight?

c. Is there an interesting background?

Sound
a. Close your eyes. What does it sound like?

b. Will time of day impact noise level when you are filming?

c. Is this location accessible to the public? Can you control if people enter location?

Technical
a. Are there power outlets in case you need to recharge batteries and run lights?
Test your equipment prior to the shoot day. You can write down your answers to the questions below for your future reference.

1. Turn on your camera and get familiar with the menus
   a. How long does it take for the batteries to drain and for them to charge? Take backup batteries.
   b. Familiarize yourself with auto focus and exposure vs. manual. Which are you more comfortable with?

   * Note: Some cameras (DSLRs) will stop recording after 30 minutes.

2. Are you using the internal microphone?
   a. Where should the camera be positioned to record good audio?
   b. Are there any menu setting that allow you to control the audio?

3. Are you using an external microphone?
   a. What settings are on your microphone?
   b. Where can the microphone sit in relation to the subject to get the best sound?
4. Lighting & Sound

In professional productions lighting and sound are pretty complicated processes, but you don’t always need fancy equipment for a polished final product. Follow these easy DIY tips to make the best of materials at hand:

- Face the subject towards the light source to make them look 3D.
- Look for even lighting so there are minimal shadows on the subject(s).
- Take advantage of natural light (windows are your friend!)
- Film in a quiet place to avoid background noise.

You can rent a quality microphone from IT Audio Visual Creative Services here: https://it.ubc.ca/services/audio-visual-creative-services/equipment-rentals-and-events

Lighting Tip:
Use the three point lighting technique. This consists of a back light, key light and fill light arranged in a triangle around the subject. You don’t need professional lights to do this, any household lamp will do. You can even use a window for the key light.
5. Wardrobe

Recommended clothing options:

- Muted, subtle colours.
- A V-neck line works best on camera.

Avoid:

- Solid red or orange, pure black, white and neon colours
- Vibrant patterns
- Clothing with logos, words, brand names
- Do not wear green if there is a green screen

Be yourself and don’t overdo it! Wear your normal makeup.

6. Shooting

Now time for the final step - shooting footage!

Here are some tips to achieve the best look:

- Pay attention on how you are framing your shot, and use the rule of thirds (align the subject at one of the four intersection points).
- Be aware of headroom, the wider the shot the greater the headroom.
- Lock the exposure so it doesn't fluctuate.
- If possible shoot multiple takes from different angles with both wide and tight shots.

There are camera rental resources on campus: [https://it.ubc.ca/services/audio-visual-creative-services/equipment-rentals-and-events](https://it.ubc.ca/services/audio-visual-creative-services/equipment-rentals-and-events)

Example of Rule of Thirds:
In this case the photographer aligned the subject with the right intersection points.
Wardrobe Guidelines

**We Strongly Suggest**
Wearing muted, subtle colours: ideally in earthy, pastel or jewel tones. A V-neck line works best on camera. Example: Light blue shirt and gray jacket

**Please Avoid**
Wearing solid red or orange, pure black, or white and neon colours. Do not wear vibrant patterns such as stripes, plaids, checkers, polka dots, paisley, floral or geometric patterns. Also avoid any clothing with logos, words, brand names, copyrighted artwork and cartoon characters. Crew neck and turtleneck items are also not recommended. If you are being shot on a green screen, do not wear green

**Additional Tips:**
- Wear outfits that reflects your position or role
- Wear subdued garment
- Wear consistent colour palette
- Avoid wearing overly-bright makeup
- Avoid wearing jewellery, having keys or objects in pockets that produce noise
- Try to avoid metal-framed glasses
- Please be sure to bring glasses if you are using the teleprompter

**Choose Garments with:**
- Darker colours
- Solid colours
- Single coloured from head to toe (e.g. suit)
- Vertical lines
- V-neck (e.g. short coat, v-neck shirt or sweater)
- Single-breasted jacket

**For full-length shots (i.e. stand-up shots), choose:**
- High heels
- Well-tailored clothes

**Make-up**
- Please wear your normal make-up, but bring what you have used to the shoot

**Hair**
- Try to ensure your hair is not covering your face
- Bring a brush for any final touch-ups with you
Post-Production

When starting to edit, begin with a foundation of knowledge. Watch tutorials and do a test project or two before working on your own video to save yourself frustration.

Following a workflow is important, everything does not have to look perfect right away.

Remember to use your script & storyboards to keep yourself on target.

7. Media Management

Media Management is an important part of any video production project. Naming files can really help you stay organized and find where all your footage is.

If multiple people are working on the same project try and keep all your video, audio, and documents in one location (ex. folder or external hard drive) so that only one person can make changes at a time.

Always keep a backup hard drive in a safe place.
8. Software

There are a multitude of post-production softwares available depending on your budget, skill level and how much time you have to learn and work with a software.

For your first video project you might want to try:

- iMovie (mac)
- Windows Movie Maker (PC)

These software are free. They have an accessible user interface and you can learn to use them in a relatively short period of time.

If you have more time, a higher budget, and you are willing to take more time to learn a complex software you can try Final Cut Pro or Adobe Primere. These software are used by professionals so we recommend watching tutorials on Lynda.com (Free for UBC faculty and staff). YouTube is a great resource for tutorials on whichever software you decide to use.

9. Edit Your Project

Before editing interviews transcribe them, word for word. This may seem like a time-consuming process at first but seeing the material you have to work with on paper makes the editing process much easier.

Refer back to your script and storyboard when you start to compile footage and order them in a timeline.

10. Outputs

When you’re ready to export your video, take a moment to consider your outputs

Outputs for web use:

- H.264 is a format that is ideal for YouTube, Vimeo, and other web use. There should be a H.264 option in the export/share bar of your software.
- 1260 x 720p or 1920x1080p are HD Resolutions
Animation

Types of Animation

There are four main types of animation typically used in media production. Below is a brief overview of what they are and how you can use them in your own projects. This type of media usually has a long planning process, so be sure to give yourself time to learn the software and organize your materials.

1. Whiteboard

Whiteboard animation allows you to create videos that simulate drawing on a whiteboard. This is a popular instructional form of media which allows you to be creative in your storytelling.

**Software:**

**Videoscribe**

Whiteboard animation software created in the UK. Creates scribe by using pictures and graphics paired with movement and sound. Great for creating a simple story or message. It is the easiest to learn and teach yourself.

Videoscribe is free for all faculty and staff. Once you are in Connect, click the “Resource” tab, then scroll down to the bottom of the page to register for Videoscribe. You will then get an email that will notify you of more registration details.

**Go Animate**

Can create narratives and presentations. Gives you access to thousands of characters and models, with even the option for lip synching your characters and voice over narration. Choice of monthly or yearly subscription.
2. Stopmotion

Stopmotion is a form of animation that makes physical objects appear to be moving on their own. This type of animation tends to take a long period of time as the creator must shoot frame by frame in order to give the object movement.

Software:
Stopmotion Pro
This animation program is not overly complicated to learn and allows you to make seamless stop motion projects. Highlights include a smooth playback of 30 frames per second, the ability to capture multiple frames with one click, and customized shortcuts.

3. 3D Animation

3D Animation lets you tell stories with 3D figures, characters and shapes.

Software:
Muvizu
This 3D animation package is equipped with an easy to use interface, customizable characters, lip syncing, and a vast animation library. It is PC only.

4. Motion Graphics

Motion graphics are created with computer software to give objects motion and rotation. Computers are able to randomize and calculate changes to transform various imagery. This goes beyond the scope of DIY, but it’s good to know it exists – you never know what might spark inspiration for your own projects.

Software:
Adobe After Effects
Industry standard program that allows you to create motion graphics with your assets and 3D effects. Subscription required.
Screencast is a great medium for instructional use when creating a voice-over PowerPoint presentation or step-by-step on screen tutorial. A screencast allows the audience to see teaching materials on screen and hear the speaker’s explanation at once creating an interactive learning experience (option for talking head). This is a popular choice for professors seeking a more personal touch to their project.

It also offers more freedom and comfort, as it allows students to view them at their own pace and gives learners flexibility on where or when they can watch videos. In addition screencast gives the option for downloading videos for playback offline on computer or mobile devices. The following instructions will illustrate how to create a voice over Powerpoint screencast.

1. Make a Slideshow

- One popular way to execute a voice over PowerPoint screencast is by creating a slideshow of all the material you want to cover first. You can make a slideshow on Powerpoint and then present and capture it though the screencast software Camtasia later on. Keep the slideshow simple. With what you want to say in mind, develop a visual skeleton that will engage viewers. This is a good place to put any graphs, videos and pictures.

- Another thing to keep in mind are the images used in your slides. Are they properly copyrighted? Make sure they are all copyright cleared or have a water-mark so you don’t run into any problems.
2. Script & Storyboard

The main objective of a screencast is to teach an audience material. The ideal screencast should be between three and five minutes. When writing your script you should:

- Be clear and concise
- Write talking points
- Note time markers for each slide
- Don’t read word for word

If you have complex materials for your presentation or if you want to switch between your slides and talking head, it’s a good idea to prepare a storyboard for your screencast. A storyboard outlines the sequence and outline of the content of the video.

When preparing a storyboard make notes of what photos, diagrams or links you want to have on screen when you are recording. If you are using a slideshow, you can make note of what slide you want up for each talking point.

3. Get Content Ready

After creating the script and storyboard pull together any additional online materials you might need on top of the slideshow. For example, during the screencast you might want to switch to a new window to show a video, or maybe you have a handout you want the viewer to see.

Collect all of these extras and have them ready to go on screen so when you hit record, the desktop will be easy to navigate with all of your materials ready. It would be a good idea to practice moving to different content on screen so you’re comfortable with transitions. It is recommended to minimize the amount of time you switch between windows/pages. If there are too many switching, it can be distracting for the audience.
Production

4. Get Set Up

- Find a quiet place to record a screencast away from all distractions.
- Make sure your microphone and webcam are set up and working properly.
- If you are also talking head and recording yourself, be sure to film in a bright place with windows so the viewer can see you.
- A common problem during screencast recordings is poor sound levels. If you have a wireless microphone or USB headset, make sure it is not covered by any clothes or obstructions for the best results.

5. Record

- Once you are all set up, it's time to record. Relax. You can always edit in post-production if you make a mistake. If you make some minor mistakes during the recording, just pause for a few seconds and continue and the mistake can be cut later.

- Keep a standard pace. You don’t want to go too fast, but you also don’t want to go too slow either. It might take a while to get used to talking to a screen, but visualize yourself in a classroom and try to talk like you were talking to a group of students.

- Once you’re done your first take, listen to it through and decide if you want to record the screencast again. If you feel like you want another go at it, record again. It’s always better to have more footage than not enough.
Post-Production

6. Choose Your Software

- There are a few different options when it comes to screencast editing software. The most popular is Camtasia. Camtasia is a little more difficult to get the hang of but it has more features than most other video recording applications. With Camtasia the payoff is huge if you take the time to learn it. The program gives you options to create illustrations, graphics and visual effects and you can produce and edit your own video and create a final video product appropriate for different devices with various formats.

- If you want a more cut and dry program Snagit is a popular software that is easy to use and gets the job done. The drawback with Snagit is that there is not as many features and you are limited in what effects you can use. (UBC faculty and staff can get Camtasia and Snagit for free)

- Jing is another smaller program that is even more straightforward than Snagit. It is very basic and easy to learn if you want to put a screencast together quickly. There are no editing capabilities but it is free for videos under five minutes.

7. Edit

After picking what software is right for you, start the editing process. This is when you can make those cuts where you made mistakes and re-record audio if some levels are off. Keep your script and storyboard at hand so you know what the end product needs to look like.

8. Accessibility

To abide by UBC’s commitment to accessibility in Online Learning, you would want to prepare a transcript, captions and audio descriptions for your videos. Some students like to see a final script of the screencast so there is a hardcopy of the information covered. Also the audio descriptions and captions are helpful if viewers are hearing impaired.

You can either have the transcript on the screen as subtitles, or if you find this distracting to the visual material, you can offer a link of a hardcopy students can download. In this case, the video transcripts must be provided in text, HTML or Word document and must be immediately after the video or linked after the video.
Pre-Production

Podcasts can be an effective storytelling tool. The four tools of a podcast are voice, sounds, music and silence, and it’s astonishing how far these can go to captivate listeners. Without visual distractions, podcasts are able to hone in on specific content and intimately engage the listener.

1. Brainstorm

Chances are you already have an idea of what you want your project to sound like. That’s great! If not, think of radio and podcasts that you enjoy, and what makes them successful. It’s time to put your thoughts down on a page and get those creative juices going.

At this step in pre-production don’t worry about the details. Let your mind explore and start to connect the dots. Think of what you’re hoping to say, who you may want to speak with, and how you can use sounds to set scenes.
2. Write a Script

- Now it’s time for more specifics. How will you take your ideas from step one and convey them to listeners? This may take some time to figure out, so be patient. Write down exactly what you want to be said in the podcast and any sound or music cues.

- Writing for the ear is very different than writing a report or an essay. You’ll need to perform the script comfortably, and listeners must be able to follow along with what you’re saying with no chance to re-read a line if it’s confusing. Here are some scriptwriting tips:

1. One thought per sentence. Keep your sentences brief; this is not the time for a paragraph-long run-on sentence.
2. Be concise. Avoid unnecessary description and use direct language.
3. Be clear. Avoid jargon and, when possible, acronyms. If you’re using stats, round the numbers or use metaphors to convey meaning.

3. Book a Studio

If you don’t want to go through the trouble of renting a microphone and setting up your own recording station, studio spaces are available on campus.

UBC’s campus radio station, CiTR 101.9 FM, has studio space available free to members and for a nominal fee for other campus users. At CiTR, you can record your own podcast and edit it all in one place.

Alternatively, you could rent your own microphone and record your podcast at home. Make sure to get all of the proper equipment and familiarize yourself with how to use everything so when it’s time to record the process will go smoothly.
Production

4. Get Set Up

- Regardless if you are using a professional studio or you have made your own make-shift one at home, it’s important to set up and get prepared before you start recording. Make sure you are approximately 3 inches away from the microphone to get the best levels (the average distance between an extended thumb and pinky).
- Check to see that the microphone and computer are connected properly. There’s nothing worse than thinking you’ve recorded something and discovering the opposite! Using headphones while recording can help with this.
- Relax. Your voice is the only thing at work. Listeners can tell when someone is nervous or unsure of what they are talking about. Take a deep breath. Remember you can do as many takes as you want! Try clearing your throat or doing some simple vocal warm-ups to get your voice sounding its best. Avoid coffee or carbonated drinks; stick to water.
- Have your script at hand. Make sure to have your script so you know when and what to say.

5. Hit Record

Start recording! Get comfortable with your own voice, and know that most people find the sound of their recorded voice strange the first time they hear it. Feel free to record the podcast a couple of times so when it’s time to edit you can choose the best take. Try to use your natural speaking voice, don’t try to force your voice to do something that it isn’t accustomed to.
Post-Production

6. Backup & Listen

- It’s a good idea to save all of your audio files in a safe place before you start to edit and make changes. Keep the original recordings, in case you need to revisit them. MP3 files are typically smaller than MP4 (video) files so your everyday USB stick will do.
- Listen to what you recorded. Make note of the minute markers on parts you want to keep so when you start to edit it will be easy to select the clips.

7. Edit

- Familiarize yourself with audio editing programs like Audacity or Garageband. If you are new to the programs, watch a few tutorials first to get the hang of the interface.
- Put together your podcast! Keep your script and notes you made in step two close at hand to speed up the process and remind yourself of the direction you want to go. It can get overwhelming the more files you have but keeping the end product in mind helps give the editing process focus.
- If you are using Audacity, be mindful of saving often. Saving yields two items: an .aup file and a _DATA folder. Both of these need to be kept together if you wish to re-open your project and continue editing.
- Once you feel like you’ve made all of the edits needed and you’ve listened to it through, export it as an MP3 and you’re set! MP3s exported at 192kbs will sound superb, although it’s fine to go as low as 128kbs. Exporting lower than 128kbs can cause the sound to be tinny, and above 192kbs is most likely overkill, generating a needlessly large file.

8. Share!

Think of ways to share your podcast. You can host your mp3 on a site like Soundcloud, or post it to a blog. Then share it with your friends and colleagues.
Once you have finished your project there are a few ways to share it with an audience. However, before you go to share anything it’s always a good idea to keep in mind these points to maximize the success of your distribution:

1. Who is your target audience?
2. How long is your project?
3. What is your goal/what do you want to achieve?

After thinking carefully about these questions you can decide which social media platforms are right for your project. Here is a run-down of a few main sharing sites to help you get started.

1.  
   ![Facebook Icon] 
   **Facebook**
   - Curates videos for the user, users have no real way to search for videos. They are just given the option to watch certain videos based on Facebook’s algorithm on their interests.
   - Video would be posted on either your own personal page or project page.
   - Facebook gives you insights or “Video Metrics” on your project once it’s uploaded so you can better understand your audience. You will be able to see the average duration the video was viewed, the number of views your video reached, and the number of times your video was viewed to 95% of its length.
   - Facebook recommends these settings for optimal video quality on their site:
     1. H.264 video, AAC audio, MOV or MP4 format
     2. Aspect ratio of 1280px wide no higher, divisible by 16 px
     3. 30 fps or less
     4. Sample rate audio of 44, 100hz
2. **YouTube**

- YouTube does not curate videos for users, they are free to search for any video and create their own viewing experience.
- Video would be posted to your own personal “channel” and your audience would be your subscribers.
- YouTube gives very detailed video analytics. They have three different reports: earnings, views and engagement. Within these reports you can discover viewer demographics, audience retention, and monetization (YouTube puts advertisements on your videos based on their content targeting).
- Recommended settings:
  1. H.264
  2. Frame rate should be uploaded in the same as it was recorded (24, 25, 30, 48 etc.)
  3. 16:9 aspect ratio.

3. **Vimeo**

- Smaller niche site where the audience is a community of dedicated professionals. There is less clutter on Vimeo than YouTube and Facebook.
- No advertisements.
- Analytics lets you explore track plays, loads, video finishes, comments, likes as well as how many times the video was embedded in different domains.
- Recommended settings:
  1. H.264 codec
  2. 24, 25 or 30 fps
  3. 4:3 or 16:9 aspect ratio
  4. Sample rate audio 48 kHz
4. Share it!

There is definitely a lot to think about when deciding which platform is best for your project. That being said, you don’t necessarily need to only choose one. It might be a better idea to post to both Facebook and YouTube, or even all three. The more platforms your project is uploaded to, the larger your audience is. Posting to multiple might make analytics harder to track but it might be worth the greater number of views in the long run. If this is the route you take, one tip is to always upload the video uniquely to each platform. If you merely embed a YouTube video into Facebook, Facebook will not prioritize your video because it was not uploaded within their system.

Once you do post your video, keep an eye on your analytics so next time you create a project you can modify your approach based on the target audience you want to reach.

5. Use an Established Audience

Alternatively if you don’t want to start from scratch and build your own audience you can take advantage of already established channels. If your video is relevant to the UBC Community you can have it posted on the UBC official channels by submitting it to:

- Storybox at http://stories.sites.olt.ubc.ca/
- Kaltura, UBC’s Streaming Service on Connect
- For more questions about sharing your project with UBC contact: Houston White, Digital Marketing Specialist, houston.white@ubc.ca, 604-826-5768
How can UBC Studios help?

Consultation
Presentation Layout & Design
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Sign up for a DIY Media Support Session at diy.ubcstudios.ubc.ca