

ONLINE VIDEO GUIDELINES

MODULE 4 – GET YOUR WEBSITE SEEN

Here are some tips to help you create your first online videos.

For all videos:

- Decide whether to use live action or screen capture (or a blend of both). Make sure you have the necessary tools. Write your script, if you'll be using one.
- Make some really short clips just playing around. Get comfortable with your tools. Get used to doing multiple takes. Notice what works and what doesn't.
- Introduce yourself at the beginning of your video. Provide the url of your site at the end.
- Be big, be bold, be funny. Turn up the energy in your voice.
- Sound quality matters. Use a dedicated mic. (Corded lavalier mics are inexpensive.) Do whatever you can to eliminate background noise. If filming outside, you need a wind-free site or a windscreen for your mic.
- Turn off your phone ringer. Close your windows. Let people know you'll be recording so you don't get interruptions. Turn off the sound on your computer, and any backups or other programs that run in the background. Remember to turn it all back on when you're done.

For live action videos:

- Choose an uncluttered, interesting setting with good diffused light and no backlighting. Morning is usually best. Make sure there's nothing distracting behind you. Test your shot.
- Film close up to see your expressions well. Film yourself slightly off center in the frame.
- Turn up the energy in your eyes, your face, your body. Open your eyes wide and slightly exaggerate expressions.
- Don't be a talking head. Move around, gesticulate, use props.
- Look at the camera as if you're looking into someone's eyes.
- Dress for success. Use color. Women: Wear foundation and a darker lipstick than usual. Wear a collared shirt and colorful bold jewelry that doesn't jingle, or a scarf.

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For screen capture videos:

- If capturing a PowerPoint slideshow, set your aspect ratio in PowerPoint to 16x9 (to avoid black bars on both sides of your slides when you record your video).
- Write your script directly into PowerPoint rather than importing from a word processor. Use more slides with shorter phrases. Use simple animation effects, like Fade.
- Use images wisely. Don't overdo it.
- When recording, make sure your cursor is out of the frame.

Editing your video:

- Don't worry about minor errors.
- Add background music for a finished feel. The easiest way to do this is to license a clip from a royalty free music clip service.
- Add a "load screen" at the beginning, to give your viewers something to look at while the video loads, and a closing screen that shows the url of your site or your call to action.
- When finished, upload to your hosting platform and have your designer embed the player code where you want it on your site.
- Be aware that online video quality drops a couple of notches to accommodate file size. That's just the way it is.

Don't be camera shy. Don't be a perfectionist. Just make a video that's "good enough" and get it out there. And then make another one.