

Hurst Horticultural Show

Guidance Notes and Instructions for

YouTube Video Entry – Class 114 in 2017

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Guidance

If you have any questions about entry instructions please send them to this email address video@hursthorticulturalshow.com.

Music

If you include music in your video you must have the right to use it. YouTube has a list of music you are free to use but some have requirements to acknowledge the copyright owner which must be followed.

Helpful Sources

You do not need a video camera to enter. You can tell a story with just pictures, royalty free music and captions using the free video maker software that comes with Windows and Apple Macs.

This is an example based on the 2015 Hurst Show:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcHQE42FBWY>

The above video was made with Windows Movie Maker and the video below explains how to use this software:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcQPoM2McHo>

For the more ambitious you will want to mix video, sound files and text overlays and possibly transitional effects. The video and sound files can be created with a Smartphone but you will find it limiting unless you steady it with a tripod and add an external microphone to improve sound quality.

Advice on Video Editing Software

I am not an expert so my comments here are on what works for me and I hope they may be helpful. Firstly I work in a Window environment and not Apple. I know Apple have the iMovie software and it is highly regarded, however my experience is with the Microsoft equivalent called Windows Movie Maker.

Video making software mixes sound and video files created in your camera so the first thing you have to work out is how to transfer files from your camera to your PC. This is usually

done with the USB cable used for charging your Smartphone. Plugging it into your PC usually allows you to search for files using Windows Explorer.

You need to check your Smartphone works like this.

Windows Movie Maker

This is very easy to use. It is an application that brings together videos, sound and image files and allows you to modify them to some extent, add text and export as a single video file suitable for YouTube.

The software is free from Microsoft and comes as part of its Windows Essentials suite of applications. If it's not already on your Windows computer you can download it from the Microsoft site. As a novice it can do everything you need, the only limitation is that it's not designed to have two sound tracks at the same time. This means, for example, you cannot have a music background to a narrative. In my view this limitation is small compared to the benefit of ease of use.

There are, however, a couple of other technical issues that you may need to address to use Windows Movie Maker. The first is that although it claims to handle a number of video and sound formats in reality the only reliable formats are Microsoft's own of WMV for video and WAV for sound. File formats are very confusing because there are so many. Firstly you need to find out the format of the video files and audio files you generate. This may not be obvious and you may not have the option to output in WMV so you may have to first convert the files in another application.

If you find any problems importing files into a Windows Movie Maker project my advice is to first ensure that the software is compatible with your computer's version of Windows. This is not easy to do and the best video that explained to me how to do it is below. This video shows how to configure the Movie Maker software to be compatible with Windows 8. I had no end of problems before I followed the change explained in this video to solve a number of file incompatibility issues.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhbNINR7YwY>

Sound

You need to check that your Smartphone can actually record sound. Most modern ones do and use the same socket, which is stereo, for headphones and a microphone.

Also, when importing sound files into Windows Movie Maker it's important they can be heard and this may mean increasing sound volume. Unfortunately you may find this cannot be done effectively within the software and so you might need sound editing software to edit the sound file before importing. I've used Audacity (<http://www.audacityteam.org>) because it's free and

very good. However, hopefully you won't need this as the idea is to tell your story, not get bogged down in the technology.

Your Smartphone or video camera will record into one file but when you import the video file into your editing software you will see the sound separate from the vision. This enables you to have full control over creating your final video.

Sound Quality

The quality and volume of sound is very important. The sound recorded by most bottom end cameras and Smartphones is poor. This can be improved by using a separate microphone, and there are two main types:

A lapel microphone plugged into a Smartphone will transform the sound quality relatively cheaply. Such a microphone stays at a constant, and short, distance from your mouth. This gives both good sound, and the freedom to move in front of and behind the camera.

If plugging into a Smartphone, make sure the jack plug on the microphone is stereo by checking it has two insulating rings on the plug. If it only has one then only one of the two sound channels in the Smartphone will be recorded. Also you need to consider the length of the microphone lead to give you freedom of movement.

There are a many lapel microphones on Amazon and if you search for lapel or "lavalier" microphone you will find a number with reasonable reviews. For example, the Boya lavalier condenser Microphone has a 20ft cable and a number of good reviews and costs £14.95. There are others with a shorter lead starting at about £8.

You can use other types of microphone and you may like to consider these if you wish to record a conversation between two people at the same time. However, be aware that the recording level in the Smartphone is automatic which means it increases during quiet periods to pickup all the sound it can. This will include all the background noise you don't want and this is particularly a problem outside.

If you can live with this drawback then another type of microphone may work for you. My advice is that when looking for a microphone you should consider its directionality. Some will record mainly in front of the microphone and cancel out sound from the side and these are described as "ultra" directional. The HTDZ is a good example and also has a switch that reduces this directionality. It costs £19 from Amazon, but you will probably also need a shock mount kit at £11, and you might want to buy a replacement cable that eliminates an adaptor in the one provided, for about £8.

Another microphone is a Takstar that is also called a shotgun microphone and costs £19. This includes a shock mount but is not as directional as the HTDZ.

Both will give good results recording an interview in a quiet room or studio, however my view is that the HTDZ is better outside because of its “ultra” directional specification.

Both are cheap yet produce very good quality for their price. There are professional microphones that are better but cost ten times as much.

When deciding on a microphone you need to research the models available and make your own choice.

Camera Stability

Particularly if using a Smartphone you should consider a tripod to keep the camera still. You will also need it if you are going to speak in front of the camera. You will need a Smartphone holder mount which cost about £4 and a tripod that can cost from £10 to £60 depending on height required, how stable you need it, and if you would like smooth pan and tilting in your filming.

At the lower price range consider height particularly as you will probably want to talk into the camera while standing. If you want a tall, heavy-duty tripod with a fluid head designed to give smooth pan and tilting of a video camera then the Velbon Videomate 638 at about £54 from online stores is worth looking at.

More Advanced

If you find Windows Movie Maker limited then you can gain more control over the creation of your video, by moving to more advanced video making software. I use VideoPad by NCH Software because I have learnt its quirky ways. However, there are probably better options available today. A big advantage of more sophisticated software is their ability to cope with a wide variety of import file formats which avoids the possible need to convert video and sound files before using them. They will also cope with two, or more, sound files so you can, for example, add background music to a voice over which overcomes the biggest drawback of Windows Movie Maker which is only being able to record one sound channel at a time.

If you have any questions or comments please ask.

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