

"A TOOL FOR CHANGE"

VIDEO TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS



REPORT ON A TWO-DAY COMMUNITY TRAINING SEMINAR HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY AND 16 MARCH 2002



REAP
177 Mid Street
Keith
Banffshire
AB55 5BL
Tel: 01542 888070

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CONTENTS

Background	1
Training Seminar Details	2
Evaluation - 16 February	4
Evaluation - 16 March	7
Conclusions and Recommendations	10
Appendix One - Materials included in the training	11

BACKGROUND

In early 2002, members of Rural Environmental Action Project (REAP) identified a need for campaigning and communication training for community groups in Moray. Using video as a tool to promote change was seen as an ideal introduction to some of the more complex issues which community groups have to confront when seeking to get their message across.

The training session was to be free and over two days for community groups who would like to train up to two members in order to assist the group in their video projects. The community groups which applied were - *New Moray LETS*, *YWCA Campaigning Group*, *Friends of the Moray Firth Dolphins*, *Lhanbryde Tenants Group*, *Moray Against Poverty*, *Take-a-Break*, and the *Findhorn Foundation*. Individual volunteers from Keith and Forres who were interested in Video production were also included.

The first training seminar was booked in the Elgin Community Centre and would involve exploring the possibilities that video offers to community groups and an opportunity to do some paper exercises on the subject. The second training seminar was booked in the Elgin Library to make use of their video editing facilities and would involve the more technical aspects of video production. The training was intended as an introduction to what was seen as a highly complex field. Full details of the programme are included in the appendix.

A total of 10 volunteers attended the first session and 13 attended the second session. This was out of an anticipated 14 participants.

The training was provided by David Munro of Moving Images, a local expert on community video and organised by Rod Lovie and Claire Ross of REAP.

Thanks are due to the staff of both the Elgin Community Centre and the Elgin Library for all their help and to the additional trainers brought in by David Munro.

TRAINING SEMINAR DETAILS

The training was delivered over the course of two day long seminars. Details of these are as follows:

Day One

Date: Saturday 16 February, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Venue: The Dining Room - Elgin Community Centre, Trinity Road, Elgin IV30 URE

Details:

The morning consisted of an introduction to the various applications of video for community groups.

Participants were encouraged to explore how they could use video for their community group. Among others, project application of video could include:

- *Campaigning and issue based work*
- *Fundraising*
- *Recording events*
- *Sharing expertise*
- *As a personal development tool*
- *Self confidence building*
- *Video diary or video box*
- *Cross generational work*

Lunch was provided at the Elgin Community Centre.

In the afternoon participants were taken through the process of organising a project. This consisted of a paper exercise where participants identified the issue that they want to explore on video and identify the key elements they will require. We looked at topics such as the process to follow; the structure and narrative of video; voice over; music or sound effects etc.

Participants then took part in a paper exercise on a fictional topic where the various elements and methods were explored.

Day Two

Date: Saturday 16 March, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
Venue: The Gallery, Elgin Library, Cooper Park, Elgin

Details:

The morning consisted of a recap on the previous 'paper exercise' before going on to explore the technical aspects of using video. This included:

- *Camera operation*
- *Framing*
- *Composition*
- *Simple camera moves*
- *The use of microphones*

Participants then split into three groups to take turns looking at the skills used for interviewing outdoors, interviewing indoors and editing. While exploring the skills of interviewing, participants were invited to take turns in being the cameraperson, the interviewer, the interviewee and the observer/assessor. The results will then be examined by the group.

While exploring the skills of editing, participants were taken through the process of using some simple editing techniques. This was a hands on tuition on the skills of inter-cutting various images and selected sections of interviews together; beginning to construct a narrative; adding a little commentary and music etc.

Lunch was provided.

By the end of the training it is hoped that participants will be able to go away with a greater understanding of video production - how to put a video together into a watchable piece of work to aid peoples understanding of the issue. They will also have had hands on experience of the camera and an introduction to the filming and editing process. It is hoped that this training will only be the start of a process where participants will go on to use their new skills to produce videos for their respective community groups.

EVALUATION RESULTS FOR THE COMMUNITY VIDEO TRAINING
ELGIN SAT 16TH FEBRUARY 2002

• **General Comments on the training :**

Comments:

Great to see how videoing can be used. Made me think how I can use it
Really good - very informative
Gave me plenty to think about re using a film to publicise my project for use in training or as support re talks
Very informative
Good - exciting. The afternoon was a little slow - feel like I didn't need so much time talking through all of the listed issues, some of which looked pretty self-explanatory
A well presented workshop covering all aspects of video film making
Informative and helpful. Allowed me to meet other people interested in putting together film
Interesting and useful. Good to see finished products made by other small groups
Very useful seeing how powerful video can be when used for a campaigning tool via video clips
Really good as he does let you see people in your situation make a film to a standard of expertise

• **Most useful part of the day :**

Comments:

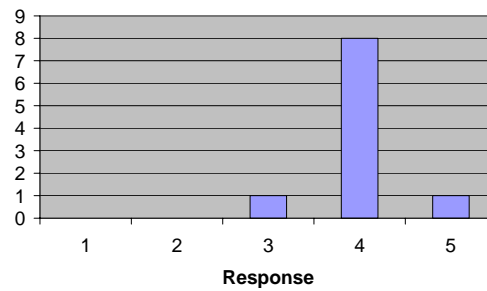
Interacting with people from other areas with same ideas or problems
Video clips and the sheets
Going over points about making a video
Seeing the different styles and concepts of video filming
The mornings video clips and David talking about his background
Talking ideas out
Meeting a professional film maker
I liked seeing the videos and the handouts. Discussion brought up some useful ideas
Have got worksheets with lots of tips and things I need to know to store and file
Letting me see film made by kids and have the advantage of him saying that it can be done in a matter of days with the right help

• **Least useful part of the day :**

Comments:

Not knowing what time we finished 3.30 or 4.30
Could have been done more quickly and concisely - bit more interactive
When conversation got caught up in present rural issues - but I think this was unavoidable due to make up of the class
Probably too much discussion getting away from the point
The afternoon was a little slow
Some films were a bit long
It was all relevant
Lots of sitting
It was all good as you need all of the things covered - too long

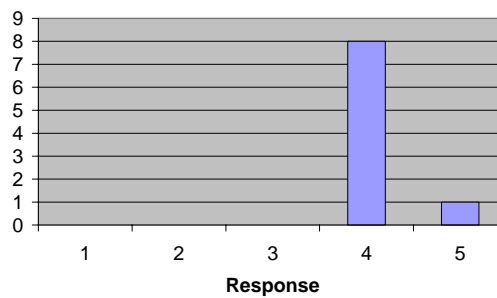
- What did you think of the day as a whole? (score out of 5, with 5 being the best)



Comments:

Good food, good video clips and lay out was fine. Give more next time.
 Thoroughly enjoyed my day with plenty to think about on the journey home. Can't wait till March!
 Looking forward to next month and using equipment
 Very informative, well structured. I can't wait for the next sessions.
 Enjoyed the day as a whole

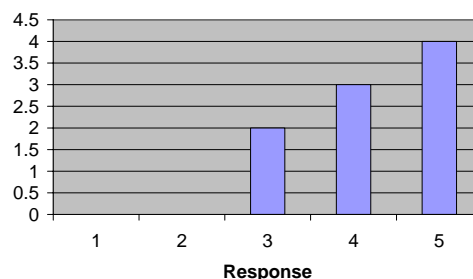
- What did you think about the structure and organisation of the day?
 (Score out of 5, with 5 being the best)



Comments:

Organisation of the day was fine with everyone being very helpful
 Perhaps could have discussed the basic functions of the video camera
 Fine
 Well laid out. The attention never dipped

- How relevant did you find the day for you/ your organisation?
 (i.e. in what context might you use it? Score out of 5, with 5 being the most relevant)

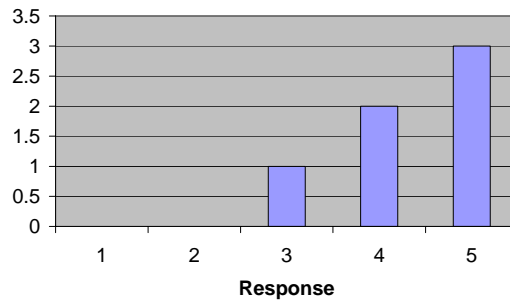


Comments:

Great. Have to find a way to experiment.
 Very relevant, new project, new ideas and after today more new ideas
 Will comment after next workshop

Let me meet people who will hopefully allow me to make films
Very useful
Am looking forward to using it

- How did you rate the information sent out previous to the training?
(score out of 5, with 5 being the best)



Comments:

Very good - well done Rod
Information was relevant and set the days activities out well
OK
Didn't receive any

- What did you think of the venue/food?

Comments:

Can we have a doggie bag?
Food very good / venue not great - a bit noisy
The venue was quite noisy at times but after the class above us left it was ok. Food excellent!
Good and plenty
Just fine
Fine. Great rolls and fruit
The venue was easy to get to and the food was very lovely
Venue - food really good
Good as usual

EVALUATION RESULTS FOR THE COMMUNITY VIDEO TRAINING
ELGIN SAT 16TH MARCH 2002

• **General Comments on the training :**

Comments:

Great - A hands on taster

Great - but needed more time. I feel like it is now possible for me to make a video - I am amazed how easy it is to edit.

Very informative and also nobody assumed that we knew what we were doing and so stayed on a good level.

I was really happy with the training. It had good information on how to make a good video. I really enjoyed it and would be happy to sign up to another course similar.

Excellent - I have thoroughly enjoyed my 2 days. I have learned so much I hope to use in the future.

Enjoyed the day very much. Could've been more hands on in the editing but got enough information to take away and get started.

Real good for people who have no idea and it is easy to understand and well organised.

Found today really interesting, found working with the camera not as difficult as I first thought.

It was a great day and a lot of information available but need a bit more time, maybe over 2 days, to see the video in which we recorded.

Good educational day but could be longer.

Lots of knowledge - too much to take in, in one day!!

• **Most useful part of the day :**

Comments:

Editing and practising.

Editing part - want to learn more. Wanted to watch our filming work.

The editing was interesting to see as everybody was surprised at its simplicity. I enjoyed learning about shots, positioning and using the microphone.

The editing part, I enjoyed it a lot.

Although I needed to know about camera work etc - I most enjoyed the editing.

Found the outdoor interviewing useful as that's our next movie.

Editing was most useful for me as it is not so hard to understand and is easier than I thought.

Found the outdoor filming more interesting than the indoor and not as intimidating.

Editing was useful.

Editing and camera work.

Video editing.

• **Least useful part of the day :**

Comments:

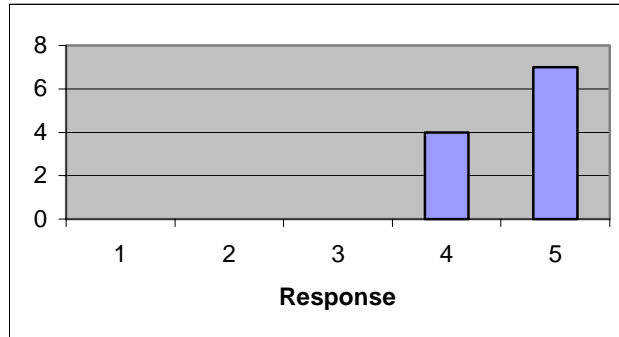
Paper exercise in morning was too long.

Non-existent.

None of it. Was excellent.

Stopping for lunch.

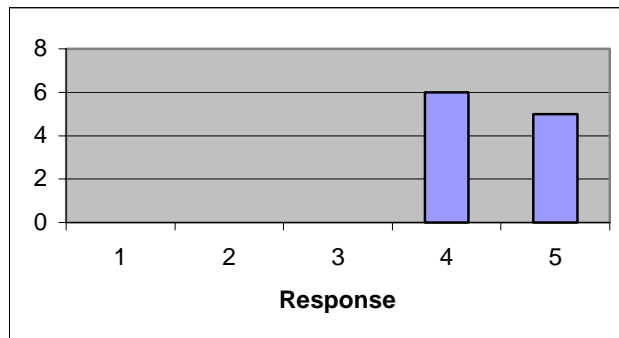
- What did you think of the day as a whole? (score out of 5, with 5 being the best)



Comments:

Need more time and a change to start and finish a project.
Well done who got this together it was well done.
Great day.

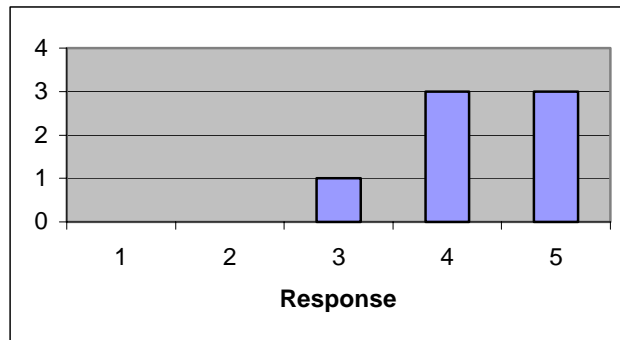
- What did you think about the structure and organisation of the day?
(Score out of 5, with 5 being the best)



Comments:

Very well done.
Need more time.
Well done it was very well organised.
Very good.

- How relevant did you find the day for you/ your organisation?
(i.e. in what context might you use it? Score out of 5, with 5 being the most relevant)



Comments:

Inspiring direction - good causes.
 I will use this for later in the organisation.
 My own use at home.
 As a means of illustrating issues in our local community as a visual diary.
 Video editing was very exciting.
 Very relevant - training and publicity and can also use for other parts of our org.

- What did you think of the venue/food?

Comments:

Excellent
 Was really kind of them to provide lunch and was fab.
 Nice and thoughtful.
 Great food (should have video'd it).
 Good, thank you.
 Was good and enough for everyone.
 Very good.
 Very good.
 Good, room too hot - but nice and quiet.
 Yummy - very nice. Thank you everyone, it has really given me a lot.
 The venue was fine and the main room was a good size for our group. Food was very good.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

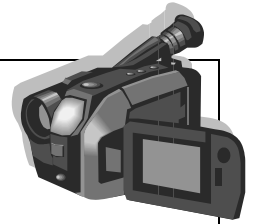
The two-day training session was seen as a great success by the participants and organisers. However, as always, there are a number of lessons which can be learned by the experience. These include:

- Although the course was fully booked, there were a few people who pulled out at the last minute and a few who only came to one session. The fact that the course was oversubscribed had led to some applicants being turned away. To ensure that those who book a place are serious and will turn up on the day it may be necessary to charge a small fee. This could be refundable at the end of the course.
- In day one, some of the participants thought the afternoon went a little slowly. More interactive methods of teaching and perhaps some hands on practice of a camera could be included in day one in the future. This is especially important after lunch when people's attention span is reduced.
- Time was a restricting factor during day two. Perhaps 12 places are too many and the course could restrict numbers to two groups. This may limit the places available to 8 but would ensure more time on the editing and other hands on techniques.
- The training in day two should end with an opportunity to view a completed video which has been made over the course of the two days. This will mean that all groups should be involved in making part of a video on the same scenario which will come together to make one complete product.
- It may be difficult to standardise an introductory course. Rather any additional training should be flexible and custom designed to fit round the specific groups needs.
- The success of this introductory course has proved the need for more courses for community groups interested in using video. Although this course was an introduction, many participants have indicated an interest in receiving more training in specific in-depth aspects of the making videos.
- If there is to be more access for community groups to video equipment, a dedicated space for editing etc would be desirable.

APPENDIX

MATERIALS INCLUDED IN THE TRAINING

Video for Community Groups - A Tool for Change



- Develops self- expression and creativity
- Promotes advocacy and representation
- Develops self confidence, social skills
- Team building – promotes interaction, co-operation and communication
- Raises awareness – through research and focusing on a particular issue
- Good information gathering – useful for canvassing opinions, particularly for people intimidated by public meetings e.g. young people
- Good for stimulating debate –i.e. showing a video at a public meeting
- Powerful fund raising tool
- Keeping a record of local events, local history, archive use
- Cross-generational work - gets young and old people communicating together

Campaigning/Issue based Video Production

Key things to think about before making the video:

Content

- What is the issue/problem/challenge?
- What do you want to say/what story do you want to tell.
- Is it balanced or one sided? What is your angle on it? What is the 'message' you want to put across?
- Do your research!
- Who do you want to interview - who are the key players/ activists/protagonists.
- Go and talk to the interviewees first if you can - find out what they want to say and importantly if they would be willing to say it on camera.
- Doorstepping?
- Do you want to use Vox pops (from the Latin vox populi - means voice of the people)....
...or a Video box - confidential/anonymous.
- Do you want to use voice over to explain the issue or leave the interviews to tell the story? Do you want a professional voice-over/ local voice(s)
- What is the balance between narration/voice over and interview?
- Important - how you begin the video - the 'Hook' and how you end it - the 'Pay-off line'

Style

What style do you want to adopt -

- Serious/ hard hitting/ shocking/confrontational e.g. Greenpeace; or.....
- Well balanced and neutral (no such thing!) letting people make up their own mind e.g. BBC current affairs programmes; or.....
- Light/comical/ satirical/ a send up/stunts e.g. The Mark Thomas Product

- What backgrounds do you use for interviews - outside/inside/at the location
- Is it a formal style - static camera - or an informal style - camera is hand held/moves around the interviewee.
- Do you want to use music for effect - creates mood, underscores the feeling/mood you want to create - also helps break up the narrative. Don't underestimate its power!
- Do you want to use sound FX for effect - like music can be quite powerful.

Different styles of production

1) Observational - 'Fly on the wall' technique - needs trust between observer and observed.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

2) Collaborative - democratic, negotiated

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

3) Directive - personal interpretation

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Interview Technique

Try and make the person you are interviewing as much at ease and comfortable as possible before you start the interview.

Tell them that they can stop the interview at any time if they get nervous.

Explain the questions you are going to ask and, if appropriate, discuss with them the answers you are looking for – help them to get their thoughts together.

Don't ask questions that would only give 'yes' or 'no' answers – unless you are challenging them.

E.g. *'Don't you think it's terrible that they're thinking about closing down the Post Office?'*

Better to ask *'Tell me, how will it affect you if the Post Office closes down?'*

Try and encourage them to use statements that start with 'I' when appropriate i.e. you are asking for their opinion.

Try and make them give answers that stick to the point – beware of waffling! If necessary ask the question again. Use the 'long' answer as a rehearsal.

If you're doing 'Vox Pops' interviews always ask the same set of questions so that you gather similar responses – either for or against. Answers should be succinct.

Interview people looking different ways – the interviewer stands on different sides of the camera. This helps with editing.



Make sure the interviewee is looking at you - positioned quite close to the side of the camera - and not looking into the camera lens - unless you have asked for that.

I deally, you will need to be about an arms length away from the interviewee.

Watch some TV programmes which use interviews - see how the interviewee is placed - where are they and what is in the background?

Are they sitting or standing - inside or outside?

How close is the shot? i.e. full face, head and shoulders, top half, all of them? Does the size of the shot change at all - zoom in or out?

How long are their answers?

Do you see or hear the interviewer?

How do their answers help inform you of the 'story' of the programme?

Decide what stance you are going to take about your particular issue - and be prepared to interview and be interviewed about it on March 16th.



Video for Community Groups - Shooting Interviews

Basic Shots

During an interview there are 3 basic shots to use:

(Can also shoot a walking interview but generally requires radio mike and an experienced cameraperson!)



1. Mid-shot (m.s.) - includes the top of the interviewees chest.



2. Close up (c.u.) - just below the level of the shoulders and includes some space above their head.



3. Big close up (b.c.u.) - includes the chin and hairline.

Try and alternate between these first two shots, the third is generally only used for intimate or dramatic effect.

Try and change shot size when there is a natural pause in the interview or during a question being asked.

Hints

- Avoid zooming in and out during the interview.
- Try and have the camera at the same height as the interviewee - sitting or standing.

- Make sure the background is fairly neutral and unmoving. – people or cars going through shot are distractions.
- Use the background to help illustrate your point e.g. film them in front of the subject matter i.e. in front of the Post Office, on the bridge over the busy road.
- Don't position the interviewee against a strongly lit background e.g. a window – too much contrast.
- Check your lighting – use domestic lamps to 'fill in' or outside on a sunny day use a reflector board.
- Make sure there are no vertical objects sticking out of their heads! i.e. lamps or lamp-posts
- Watch out for high noise backgrounds – try and find quieter places if possible. If plane goes over cut the interview and wait – makes for bad sound editing if you don't.
- Use an appropriate microphone and position it accordingly. Ensure that microphone is out of shot – just.

Useful extra shots that you may need to help the editing.

- Shoot either a long shot (l.s.) or a wide shot (w.s.) of the interviewer and interviewee together - off to one side. i.e. slightly behind one of them.
- 'Noddies' Shoot the interviewer asking the questions and also reacting to the interviewee as you would do in a conversation i.e. nodding slightly – look interested!
Generally film these questions after you have filmed the interview - using a similar size of frame as the interviewee's frame sizes. Get someone to sit in the chair or stand where the interviewee was standing to get the correct 'eye-line'. Beware of 'crossing the line' when filming the questions.
- Remember the best interviews are like a good conversation – relaxed and natural – always try and put the interviewee at ease.