

Outline Synopsis

To kick off the process it is useful to agree a 1-page synopsis, covering such questions as:

Who is the DVD aimed at?

There may be primary and secondary audiences. The audience could be local (e.g. CUH staff only), regional, national or international, within a narrow field or a multi-disciplinary group. The material might be aimed at patients only or families, friends, teachers, employers, etc.

What are the principal objectives?

These might be didactic, or designed to motivate or reassure; e.g. 'to help enable specialist ENT surgeons to carry out a new procedure for inserting bone-anchored hearing aids', or 'provide reassurance and practical advice to patients selected for renal transplantation'.

How will it be delivered?

For example, as a DVD distributed for personal viewing, for guided viewing with a professional, to be used in an oral presentation, at an exhibition, for web delivery, or to be incorporated into a Powerpoint presentation. It may be that the material will be used in more than one way.

Have you considered funding?

You might have a fixed budget available or need to take 'ball park' figures to a potential funder.

What would be your preferred style of approach?

Didactic and concise, documentary-style, warm and friendly, humorous? Should it have music, a presenter/ narrator, live action, scripted scenarios?

Who is involved?

Which subject experts should have a say in the content? Does it involve patients or patient groups, families, outside agencies? Could we use actors/ professional role players?

What similar/ related material is available and what do we need to do differently?

There may be other DVDs produced for the same or different audience, or websites, printed material, etc. The existing material might be out of date, inaccurate, of poor production quality, designed for the wrong audience or culturally inappropriate for your audience. It would be most helpful if we could have sight of any relevant materials.

Can you give a brief outline of the proposed content?

You might have a list of essential points to cover or there might be a natural chronological sequence of events to relate. Are there difficult concepts to explain? (We might want to choose between live action and still or animated 2D or 3D graphics sequences). Does it include a large amount of data? Are there important safety messages? Do you want to include existing material (photos, video, archival material...)?

What is the deadline, and how soon can you start work on the project?

The production process needs to be carefully managed at all stages so that we can meet your deadline and budget. It is important to set out a realistic timetable which takes people's other commitments into consideration. We will work with you to set deadlines for the scripting, production and post-production phases.

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Factsheet

Video and DVD production

Video is a powerful way to communicate important information to patients, colleagues and students. We have produced this Factsheet to give you some idea of the production stages for a video or DVD from an original idea to the finished product. Not all stages will apply to every project and the roles of Producer, Director, etc. are often combined, depending on the scale and budget. However, it is useful to have an understanding of these roles and to know the key stages of production before getting started.

media studio

photography • design & print • room bookings • audio visual

1. Planning

The planning stage is an important part of any video project, in terms of both its success as a programme and its total cost. It starts with a meeting between the subject expert and producer to discuss such things as the aims and objectives, finances, and the treatment and style. Before the first meeting it is useful to make some notes in the form of a synopsis – see our outline below.

2. Scriptwriting & structure

The subject expert writes a script with assistance from the Producer and / or freelance scriptwriter.

A script may take one of several different forms depending upon the style and content of the proposed programme. The first step is to write a Treatment of two to three pages. This is an outline script that describes the programme. It can be incorporated in a proposal in order to secure third party funding and / or collaboration.

DVDs are interactive so if this is the preferred choice for final delivery of your video, different sections can be scripted separately and arranged with a menu. The overall menu structure should be decided at this stage. Make sure that everyone who needs to has seen and signed off the script before shooting starts.

3. Storyboard & menu

It is sometimes useful to prepare a storyboard, where a sequence of actions needs to be precisely planned. This is particularly useful for planning animated graphics.

If you are delivering on DVD you may also want to create a menu diagram if there are a lot of sections.

4. Shooting timetable

A timetable is agreed by all parties involved and access arranged for the shooting days.

Programme sequences are not necessarily shot in chronological order, but are arranged to be shot in as efficient a manner as possible. For example, two sequences might be shot on a ward one after the other even though one may be near the beginning of the programme and one at the end.

5. Money

Funding and costing can be difficult because no two programmes are the same, but we can usually make a reasonably accurate estimate from a well thought out proposal.

You will need to identify the source of funding before we start: whether you have the money in an internal CUH/Clinical School budget or sponsorship from an external source. Manufacturers and distributors of medical equipment and pharmaceuticals are often happy to provide educational grants for the production of a relevant information video.

6. Shooting

Most of the recording should be completed before moving on to the next stage. Good planning helps to avoid delays and minimise the cost of shooting. Locations and people must be organised in advance.

Most programmes are shot using a single camera which means that we have to stop and start frequently to obtain different views of the action and to ensure that the final programme flows smoothly. This can often be a surprise because it takes longer than you might think to shoot a short sequence. People may be asked to repeat the same action several times, but this does not necessarily mean they got it wrong; it usually means that we need another shot of the sequence for the purposes of editing.

Graphics sequences and animation work might be going on while the filming is under way.

It may be useful for the subject expert to review the footage at this stage with our editor. All footage is archived in the Media Studio for any future re-edits of your video.

7. Script revision

Changes are sometimes made to the script before editing begins to take account of unpredictable differences in the action that has been recorded. However, changes at this stage should be avoided wherever possible because they can cause expensive delays in completing the programme.

8. Off-line edit

A rough edit is made so that the subject experts can review the content. This will highlight any problems. The voice-over is not normally added yet, although a rough guide track is sometimes recorded to establish correct timings.

9. Voice-over recording

A voice-over artist reads the narrative script in a sound studio. There are different ways to do this but we usually record the voice 'wild', that is, without pictures. Recording with picture can often take much longer, and both artist and studio charge by the hour.

For lower budget projects the voice over is recorded in-house by the subject expert or someone from the Media Studio.

10. Final editing and post-production

A high quality master edit is completed using our non-linear editing suite. Titles, music, and any effects are added. The time taken for this varies with the complexity of the programme and the number of changes made to the off-line edit.

11. Delivery

Once the final edit has been completed and approved, a master copy is then created on DVD or as a digital file, depending on the delivery method required.

This master copy is stored in the Media Studio for future duplication. When distributing multiple copies of a DVD, the master DVD is duplicated and the disc sleeves and boxes are designed, printed and packaged, ready for dispatch. Arrangements must be made for distributing the discs and, if they are to be sold, some marketing will need to be carried out. This might involve, for example, sending review copies to journals or distributing leaflets at meetings or by post.