

The Videomaker Guide to Video Production
Fourth Edition

The Videomaker Guide to Video Production Fourth Edition

From the Editors of Videomaker Magazine

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*This book is dedicated to Thomas Jefferson for his
commitment to pluralism, diversity and
community. He would be happy to see readers
of this book exercising freedom of the
electronic press.*

Civil liberty functions today in a changing technological context. For five hundred years a struggle was fought, and in a few countries won, for the right of people to speak and print freely, unlicensed, uncensored and uncontrolled. But new technologies of electronic communication may now relegate old and freed media such as pamphlets, platforms and periodicals to a corner of the public forum. Electronic modes of communication that enjoy lesser rights are moving to center stage.

Ithiel de Sola Pool
Technologies of Freedom
(Harvard University Press, 1983)

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Preface

There has never been a better time to be an independent video producer.

The once formidable barriers to video production have been falling one by one, and for the last 20 years, Videomaker Magazine has been chronicling that fall, and doing our best to hasten it.

The first barrier was the cost of the equipment. Million-dollar edit suites and camcorders costing over \$100,000 used to rule the television landscape. Now you can get much better images and polished productions from a \$1,000 consumer camcorder and a laptop.

The second barrier was training. Because of the expense of the equipment, access used to be limited to a technical elite, and an apprenticeship was the only way to learn the trade. However, as prices fell, the demand for knowledge on production and editing techniques began to grow. That's where Videomaker Magazine came in, and by extension, the book you're holding in your hands now.

The third barrier, I'm excited to say, is in the middle of falling right now. That

barrier is distribution. For a long time you could create a compelling video program, but getting it out in front of a sizeable audience was a frustrating and difficult process, ruled by the soul-crushing broadcast distribution system. Now, however, with recent advances in the speed of the Internet and the rise of video sharing sites, you have an equal platform on which to compete with the majors.

There has never been a better time to be an independent video producer.

You have access to:

1. Affordable equipment
2. This book
3. Audiences by the millions worldwide.

Now get out there and make something!

John Burkhart
Editor-in-Chief

Videomaker Magazine

Introduction: If You Are New to Making Video: Welcome!

Matt York
Publisher/Editor of Videomaker Magazine

The craft of making video is an enjoyable one. Whether video production is for you a pastime, a part-time moneymaker or a full-time occupation, I am certain that you will enjoy the experience of creating video. There are many facets to video production. Each brings its own pleasures and frustrations, and each will stretch your abilities, both technical and artistic.

Video is a wonderful communication medium that enables us to express ourselves in ways unlike other media. Television is pervasive in our society today. The chance to utilize the same medium that the great TV and film producers have used to reach the masses is an incredible privilege. Video is powerful. Video is the closest thing to being there. For conveying information, there is no medium that compares with video. It overwhelms the senses by delivering rich moving images and high-fidelity sound. Having grown up with TV, many of us lack the appreciation for its power. Compared with radio or print, television profoundly enhances the message being conveyed. For example,

reading about a battlefield in war can be less powerful than hearing a live radio report from a journalist with sounds of gunfire, tanks, rockets, incoming artillery fire and the emotions from an anguished reporter's voice. Neither compares with video shot on a battlefield.

It is amazing that you can walk into a retail store, make a few purchases in a few minutes and walk out with all of the essential tools for producing video. For less than \$1,500, you can buy a DV camcorder and a personal computer and suddenly, you have the capacity to create video that rivals that of a television station. The image and sound quality of a DV camcorder is better than broadcast television as viewed on an average TV. The transitions and special effects, available with any low-cost video editing software package, exceed the extravagance of those used on the nightly news.

These days, more and more people are watching high definition TV and video-sharing sites like YouTube. If you want to make a video for an HDTV audience,

you might need to invest something more like \$2,300. However, if you want to share your videos on the Internet, all you need is a webcam and you can upload directly to one of the many video-sharing sites. Realistically, if you are reading this you have a greater commitment to excellent video, which requires a camcorder and video editing. While many of the videos on these video-sharing sites are of low quality, there are plenty of people uploading and sharing some wonderfully produced videos. Video sharing is a wonderful new way to reach anyone on the planet who has an Internet connection.

There was a time when any message conveyed on a TV screen was perceived as far more credible than if it were conveyed by other media (i.e., print or audio cassette). While that may no longer be as true, video messages are still more convincing to many people.

Once a highly complex pursuit, video editing is now just another software application on a personal computer. We all realize that simply using video editing software doesn't make someone a good TV producer any more than using Microsoft Word makes one a good writer. However, the ability to edit video in your own home or office is so convenient that it enables more people to spend more time developing their skills.

One of the most rewarding experiences in video production is getting an audience to understand your vision. The time between the initial manifestation of your vision and the first screening of the video may be just a few days or several years, but there is no more satisfying (or nerve-racking) feeling than witnessing an audience's first reaction to your work.