

Capturing Your Action on Video

Guide courtesy of our allies at 350.org

Digital story telling is now more accessible than ever, with the advent of YouTube and cheap video cameras. Consider taking video as a compelling way to get the word out before your event, document your action, and amplify your impact. Here are just a few tips to keep in mind to make your video stand out:

Check your camera the day before you shoot!

Make sure your batteries are fully charged, and that you have three times as much tape or memory as you think you'll need. You never know what might happen the day of the event!

KISS - Keep it short and simple:

A video to promote or document your action should not be more than 5 minutes long. A minute-long mini-movie can have a lot of impact. Concentrate on what's exciting and important -- you don't have to jam every last thing that happened on your action into the movie.

Hold your camera steady, Freddy!

Avoid the wobble-cam look -- it makes viewers ill and steady shots are easier to edit. A good rule is to hold each shot steady for at least ten seconds when shooting (you can always cut them shorter when editing later). Use a tripod, or if you don't have one brace the elbow of your camera-holding arm on your chest, breathe in and count slowly "steady one, steady two, steady three...". It will seem like a long time when you're shooting, but you'll be very happy you have your ten seconds per shot when you start editing! If you want to move the camera across a scene (pan) do it slowly.

Shoot wide, and close-in:

Vary your shots. Shoot some wide shots to show the general scene, and then others close-in on interesting details or characterful people. Emphasize what's special about your locale -- movies showing character of place and character of people are more interesting.

Pay careful attention to sound.

If you're doing an interview, make sure there's nothing noisy going on behind the person being interviewed, or it will drown out their voice. Don't move your hands around on the camera while you're shooting — this can cause weird clunking or squeaking noises on the camera body that will be picked up by the microphone. Monitor the sound while you're shooting with a pair of headphones. A good quality stand-alone microphone, that will help you get more directed, better sound, can be bought for about \$15.

“Brand” it.

By that we mean linger on an easy-to-read shot of the event details or message and tag it with your organization name. Be sure to get great shots of the name “1Sky” for your 1Sky movie! You can use one of these for the last scene in your film.

Avoid long shots of a talking head:

There's nothing less interesting than watching 3 minutes — or even 30 seconds — of a person just talking, especially in front of their desktop computer webcam. Edit out the boring stuff that people say, only use the sentences that count.

Upload the video.

First, you can [upload your best clips of raw footage to the Citizen Global Climate Channel](#). The clips should be no longer than a few minutes in length (split them if you need to) and will be available for use by the media or anyone else. Once you've done that, you can edit your footage and upload it to a video sharing site. [YouTube](#) is a great first choice — be sure to tag it with 1Sky, climate, and other appropriate tags. For higher-quality or longer videos, use [Vimeo](#), [Blip.tv](#) or [Citizen Global](#). After. After you do, email us at photos@1sky.org to let us know it's there.

Don't have a camera?

Record audio — particularly if you can include music — and create a podcast (audio file) that can be shared on the web or sent to your local radio station as a PSA. Focus on what's fun, funny, or what you'd want to watch. That's what makes a video go viral.