



Tips & Tricks for Recording Video

Introduction

The COST Action STReESS encourages participants to create instruction videos to showcase their work. In these videos you can present specific preparation methods, such as the two COST STReESS videos on micro-core preparation that have already been released, but also common or sophisticated field and laboratory techniques used in our research fields. The videos will be used to teach students and they form part of a handbook on techniques in wood sciences to be compiled as output of our COST Action STReESS.

This document is intended as a step by step guide to help inexperienced filmmakers through the entire filmmaking process. At the same time, these guidelines will make it easier for our video editor to create a solid montage from your footage. The idea is that you provide the script and record the video footage. We will then offer assistance with the post-production process. Also, our editor is available to answer questions and review sample footage during preparation and filming.

We hope this will enable you to share your knowledge through video!

General Preparation

1: Write out all of the text that will be spoken in your video.

Why? This text forms the basis of your video and determines what you are going to record and what not. Adjusting the text now is much easier than changing the video later.

How? Your video is most likely based on a written protocol. Usually, with some modifications to this text, a good voice-over can be created. Avoid long sentences and words that are difficult to pronounce. Also, add some adverbs such as: first, then, finally, etc.

2: Create a shot list.

Why? It will help you to get all the shots you need, and it will make the actual recording much faster. A shot list can also provide good information about the things you need on the day of filming.

How? Use your texts (and your imagination) to identify every individual action you want to show. Write them all down, as if you are making a shopping list.

3: Set your camera to record at 25 frames per second.

Why? This is the default frame rate in Europe. The STReESS video templates (which we use to show logos etc.) are also created using this standard. Recording at 25fps ensures good compatibility.

How? Open the camera's menu and look for the recording options. For the correct frame rate, select the settings marked as 25, 25p or 25fps. Alternatively, you can select a frame rate of 50i or 50p.

4: Set your camera to record at a resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels.

Why? This is what is known as Full HD. Most modern cameras can record at this resolution, so we have chosen this as the default resolution for STReESS.

How? Open the camera's menu and look for the recording options. For the correct resolution, select the settings marked as 1080 or 1080p. Alternatively, you can select a resolution of 1080i, 720p or 720i.

5: Set your camera to record with a 16:9 aspect ratio.

Why? This is the standard aspect ratio for all online video players such as YouTube, Facebook and Vimeo. However, your camera is probably capable of recording various aspect ratios, so you should check the setting.

How? Open the camera's menu and look for the recording options. Select the settings marked as 16:9 or Widescreen.

6: Set your camera to a full automatic modus.

Why? It is convenient and usually gives good results, providing there is a sufficient amount of even light. If you are comfortable with manual camera operations, go for it.

How? This varies between cameras, but it should not be hard to find. In fact, some consumer cameras can only shoot automatically. If you do have some options, set them all to automatic. Make sure you include focus, audio level, white balance and gain/ISO.

7: Test your camera and the settings.

How? Take some test shots. Both indoors and outdoors. Transfer the clips to your computer and play them back. If things look (and sound) normal to you, they probably are. Also, by inspecting the file properties on your computer, you can check the frame rate and resolution. When in doubt, feel free to send us some samples for review.

8: Get permission from your talent.

Why? Interviewees and other individuals clearly visible in the video, should allow the COST Action to use their image and voice in video and/or audio recordings.

How? They should sign a release or provide a verbal statement on camera expressing that they grant permission to be filmed and footage to be used for COST purposes now and in future.

Video Recording

9: Use a tripod.

Why? Recording with a handheld camera is highly uncomfortable, editing handheld footage is inconvenient and watching handheld footage is distracting.

How? Mount your camera on a tripod. Once mounted, you can still move your camera up, down, left and right if you want to.

10: Do not use the zoom function on your camera.

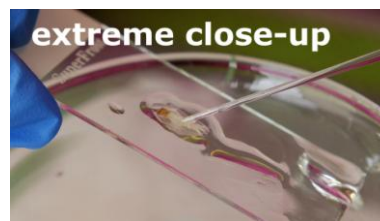
Why? Camera lenses perform much better at their wide end, so this will result in better looking footage. In addition, it will make it easier for your camera to stay in focus.

How? Zoom out as far as you can (as wide as possible) and leave it there.

11: Record a wide shot and a close-up every time.

Why? This allows our editor to lengthen or shorten the video, in order to match the length of the voice-over. Also, cutting from a wide shot to a close-up looks great. Cutting from a wide shot to another wide shot does not.

How? For every shot you have planned, you actually need to take two shots. One wide version and one (extreme)close-up version. Move your camera back – record a shot – move your camera close – record the shot again.



12: Record long shots.

Why? This allows our editor to control the speed of the film and make it feel natural.

How? Press record a couple of seconds before the 'action' starts. Then, when the 'action' is completed, keep recording for another few seconds.

Voice-over Recording

13: Find a quiet space with good acoustics.

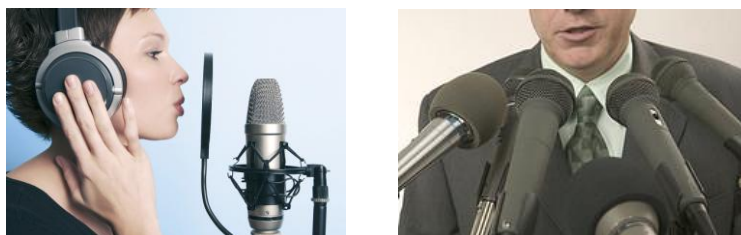
Why? This will help to keep the background noise on your recording to a minimum.

How? Small rooms with a lot of soft materials like carpets, sofa's and window drapes are good. Beware of 'humming' sounds, as produced by refrigerators and computers.

14: Get the microphone close.

Why? This generally gives good results no matter what microphone, recorder or settings you use.

How? Place the microphone approximately 15 cm from your mouth. Keep it in a position where you don't speak directly into the microphone, but over the top of it, at a near 90 degree angle (as in the examples below).



15: Record with manual audio levels.

Why? When recording audio automatically, your device will try to maintain a constant volume. This means it will record a lot of background noise when you speak too softly, but protects the sound from 'clipping' when you speak too loud.

How? If you have the option, use manual recording levels for the audio. Set the levels as high as possible, but always take care to avoid 'clipping'.

16: Record a couple of sentences at a time.

Why? This will sound the most natural. Your intonation will help the audience to understand when one section ends and another begins.

How? If something is described in three sentences: record the three sentences in one take, then stop, and move on to the next part.

17: Record some 'room tone'.

Why? The 'silence' (as described below) will actually be a small amount of noise also known as 'room tone'. Our editor can use this to mask any cuts he makes in your voice-over.

How? Right after you've recorded the voice-over, record 30 seconds of 'silence'. It is essential that you record this with the same settings and under the same circumstances.

18: Do not worry if you have an accent.

Why? A moderate accent is a good thing. It suits the international character of the video and the COST Action STReSS. In addition, it makes the video feel authentic and it will ensure the viewers' awareness about who created it.

File Preparation

19: Select the correct video and audio clips.

Why? Content-wise you are the expert. Our video editor might have a hard time recognizing footage with 'mistakes' in it. So, please screen your footage carefully.

How? Transfer all the files to your computer. For every 'action' select your best clips. This should be one wide shot, and one close-up if everything went according to plan. If you have good additional shots, please select them too. Do not select multiple takes of the same shot though.

20: Number the selected clips in a consecutive way.

Why? To help our editor process your footage correctly.

How?

- step1, shot1
- step1, shot2
- step2, shot1
- step2, shot2
- etc.

21: Send the selected and numbered clips to our video editor.

How? Go to www.wetransfer.com (or a similar service) and follow the instructions on the website. The limit is 2gb per transfer, so you will have to repeat this as many times as necessary.

22: Make sure the clips you are sending are unprocessed.

Why? Any processing degrades the footage and makes it more difficult to process by us.

How? Send the clips as they came out of your camera. Transferred to your computer yes, but untouched by any software.

23: Send your written voice-over, company logos, photos of the final result, a list of everyone who contributed to the video and any other useful information to the video editor.

Why? So the video editor can use it to create a complete video.

How? Go to www.wetransfer.com and follow the instructions on the website. File size permitting, you can send it directly to the video editor.

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