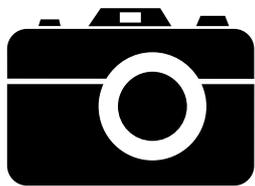


Multimedia Storytelling inside SDC

A Practical Guide



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1. How to tell your Multimedia Story

An Introduction

Multimedia products have shown a huge potential for learning. That is why the SDC Learning & Networking Team is dedicated to further develop multimedia in practice.

In 2016, the team organized different events on multimedia production. The participants received inputs on multimedia storytelling inside SDC in workshops on photography, video and interactive graphic tools.

The following Practical Guide on multimedia storytelling is based on these workshops. In the chapters about the different building block you find practical tips and tricks and further resources. During 2017 there will be more on the chapters on text, photography and graphics.

The guide is meant for beginners as well as advanced multimedia practitioners. It functions as an open source document. This means that it is by no means extensive nor universal; instead it is more an inspiration to practice more. And most importantly: Your insights, experiences and comments matter! Please send them to us to carmen.eckert@eda.admin.ch and together we will build a practical guide for multimedia storytelling inside SDC!

2. Setting the Frame

No matter which media you choose, the most important part of your story is the story itself. Because the hardest challenge for any media product is to keep your audience interested. That is why planning your story is of utmost importance!

- **What is my main message?**

What is my story about? Where is my focus? What are key moments? Who are my protagonists? From which perspective am I going to tell my story? Where does it take place?

- **Who is my main audience?**

What are their needs and interests? What do they already know about the topic? What is most relevant for them? Do not take different communication aims or different target audiences in one product. For example, if you want to communicate the topic of food security to both the public and an audience of experts at the same time, this will result in an overstrained public and in bored experts. With this you will lose both!

- **Where am going to present it?**

Do I present it during a presentation? Or is it meant for the web or print? Do I have to limit the access or is it available to anyone?

A story is always a selection and a reduction. Boil it down to the essential elements and then start polishing it!

Before you start using the flowchart – which helps you decide which part of the story to tell using what kind of media – try to boil these three key questions down to a mission statement in one sentence. The one-sentence method is widely applied in TV stations because it will lead you through the process of gathering, selecting and structuring your material and it will help you stay focused. If you notice that you have more than one story to tell, rather make several little stories. Possible examples of one-sentences are:

- “I want to show how SDC is implementing the cultural percent in Afghanistan from an artist perspective.”
- “The viewer shall learn more on how a person is living with HIV, but tell the story from her point of view and in her voice.”
- “My story shall inspire and advance a conversation on genetically modified food and food security.”

After that you can proceed to the [flow-chart](http://www.content-provider.ch/multimedia_storytelling.php) (on http://www.content-provider.ch/multimedia_storytelling.php)

3. Tips and Tricks on Different Building Blocks

3.1 Text (will follow later in 2017)

3.2 Photography

All of us possess the ability to judge a good from a bad picture. Sometimes it is quite obvious – unintentionally blurred hazy group photos with the feet cut off – or it can be more subtle with the horizon being too high or too low.

To compose attractive photos, four aspects are central: **Light**, **Form** and **Content**.

Light

Photography is essentially painting with light. That is why the direction of light is of fundamental importance. Does it come from the side, from above or below? You can use your clenched fist as an indicator. But not only the direction of light also its form matters. Is it early morning or noon? Is it sunlight or a lightbulb? And what does this light do to my subject (Dramaturgy)? Does it create a pleasant or a distant atmosphere?

Rainy or cloudy weather, early in the morning or late in the afternoon are one of photographers' preferred times – but also hard sun light at noon can carry the desired effect. Choose your light consciously!

Form

Form is another important aspect when composing your picture. Every object in your photo can be reduced to a certain form: rectangle, circle, triangle etc. The arrangement of forms helps to transport the message you want to convey with your picture. Symmetry creates harmony, order and clarity, whereas asymmetry can bring in dynamic and tension. The golden rule or the rule of thirds can help you to create harmonious pictures. But also color is a graphical element that carries certain associations and creates atmosphere.

Content

But is a well-composed and technically mastered picture necessarily the right one? Moral and ethics are crucial factors as well in deciding how we want to communicate something. Sometimes it is better not to use an image and to use words instead. In 2017, there will be more on the topic of moral and ethics in photography. The Team Learning & Networking will organize a workshop on how photography expresses social, political and (inter-)cultural issues. Stay tuned!

The Exposure Triangle

Besides these image composition rules, here are three important interrelated technical aspects you should be aware of when taking pictures:

Aperture (determines the opening through which light travels)

Shutter Speed (or exposure time is the length of time when the film or digital sensor inside the camera is exposed to light)

ISO (determines the level of sensitivity of a camera to available light) → For most settings inside an ISO around 1600 should be enough, outside try 200 or 400.

On these sites you find more information on these three aspects:

- [Photographylife](https://photographylife.com/what-is-exposure-triangle)
- [Fstoppers](https://fstoppers.com/education/exposure-triangle-understanding-how-aperture-shutter-speed-and-iso-work-together-72878)
- [Exposureguide](http://www.exposureguide.com/exposure.htm)

<https://photographylife.com/what-is-exposure-triangle>

<https://fstoppers.com/education/exposure-triangle-understanding-how-aperture-shutter-speed-and-iso-work-together-72878>

<http://www.exposureguide.com/exposure.htm>

If you decide to show your subject with photos, think about how to show it differently! Leave the ordinary behind and tell your story with new perspectives. In the following are some tips and tricks. Most of them apply also to your mobile phone, whereas some technical possibilities (see exposure triangle) may be limited.

- **Depth of field:** Work with depth of field. Focus on the important and blur the unimportant. For example, you can photograph through shelves or through an audience to capture the speaker. Or blur the background of your interview partner. Use a big aperture for that (1.8 – 4).
- **Look for unusual perspectives:** Don't be lazy! Walk around and search for an appealing perspective. Climb on the table or bend your knees – leave the ordinary eye level perspective behind. If you photograph conferences, show the audience in action (asking questions, applauding, writing down something etc.)
- **Light:** Take a stroll through your office and pay special attention to light and background. Where could be beautiful photo spots? When inside, try to photograph

people close to windows and not too close to walls. Do not photograph against the light, except you play with shutter speed or you use flash or additional light!

- **Format:** Decide on which format (1:1, 4:3, 3:2 etc.) and stay with it! Notice: If you are working with Pageflow or you want to use your photos in a video, use the 16:9 ratio!
- **Trimming:** If you trim then do it radically! Make the cut explicit.
- **Tell a story with your photos:** When composing a photo reportage, photograph with the four journalistic questions in mind: Who? How? What? Where? They give your story orientation. Every story has a beginning, middle and end. Think about how to arouse the reader's curiosity and how to create tension. Accordingly, structure your photos chronologically, thematically or geographically. But start and end with the strongest picture. In addition, capture different angles (see the following chapter on video)

Here are some photo blogs to get inspired:

- [Lens Blog New York Times](http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/)
- [Lensculture](https://www.lensculture.com/)
- [The inspired Eye](http://www.theinspiredeye.net/street-photography-blog/)

<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/>

<https://www.lensculture.com/>

<http://www.theinspiredeye.net/street-photography-blog/>

3.3 Video

There are many types of videos and respective areas of application: the classical image film, a portrait or interview, testimonials, fictional stories, documentations or reports, animations and explanatory films (How-to films). They often blend in each other, but all of them have something in common. They always consist of different camera angles. The so-called 5-Shot-Rule helps you gather the most important angles. This makes your video more varied and thus intriguing for the viewer. And different angles make it easier for you to edit your video.

The 5-Shot-Rule

These five basic angles are also an answer to the four key questions:

- 1) What? Extreme close-up (detail) -> hands
- 2) Who? Close-up -> face

- 3) Where? Wide shot -> your protagonist sitting in her/his office
- 4) How? Film over the shoulder of your protagonist
- 5) Wow! Unusual / alternative shot -> from below/above/...

The next time you view any movie or clip pay special attention to different camera angles or find more information here:

- [Mulinblog](#)
- [Storify](#)

<http://www.mulinblog.com/five-shot-sequence-tutorial-and-example/>

<https://storify.com/mututemple/sequence-shooting>

Storyboard

Now you can start with your storyboard. The storyboard does not have to be the final version of your movie, instead it is basically a To-Do List of shots you have to make. And it can give your story already a possible sequence. Invest enough time to anticipate key moments of the event you want to capture and the different takes in which you want to film those moments. Then fill in your storyboard accordingly. With your completed storyboard you are now ready to do some preparatory work.

Preparatory work

You can save a lot of energy for yourself and your interviewees if you think about a few things before you start filming. In the following are some tips:

- **Plan your shooting.** How much time do you have for planning, filming and editing? Do you need extra people to help you carry the equipment? Or do you need extra persons to ask interview questions while you are filming (or vice versa)?
- **Plan enough time to look for a nice camera setting.** If possible, visit the place during different daytimes. When filming in an unknown place, ask people if there is not a nicer place to film.
- **Choose your interviewees** carefully and do some research on them. Who has the best information? Who has a lot of experience? With whom do I want to convey what message? Or which interviewees represent contrasting views or characteristics (gender, age, class, profession etc.)? Contrast makes the story more dynamic.
- **Know your material!** Always test your material (camera, battery, microphone) and be comfortable in using it before you start filming

Interviewing skills

Video making is closely linked to interviewing. The more time you invest in the briefing of your interviewees the more easy it will be for you to edit the videos and for the viewer to stay interested. Here are some tips and tricks:

- **Ask simple and short questions** and you will get simple and short responses. Use short terms: Problem instead of problematic.
- **Pay special attention to clarity and comprehensibility.** Did the interviewee use foreign words or technical terms that are not understood by your audience? Request her/him to repeat the sentence in simpler terms.
- To avoid long and incomprehensible answers: **repeat and paraphrase the most important points** and request the interviewee to repeat them.
- If possible **start with a personal statement** (“I think that” “In my opinion...”). Personal conclusions, judgments, emotions and stories are more interesting for the viewer.
- **Think about your story:** Do you need to be as an interviewer in the movie or does the interviewee paraphrase your questions in his answers? If you want to be in the movie as the interviewer, you can simply reenact after the interviewer you asking the questions and listening to the answers.

Filming

With your fully charged camera(s), spare batteries, tripod(s), microphone(s) and storyboard you are now finally ready to shoot. These tips and tricks will help you to get started:

- Before you start filming, put your mobile phone on **flight mode**.
- If you film with your mobile phone always film **horizontally!**
- Always film with a **tripod** (except very short sequences (under 4 seconds) can be filmed without it)
- **Audio matters more than image.** Noises distract much more than bad images. Prefer quiet areas to beautiful ones. And always use head-phones when filming to check the quality of the audio. If you make a voice recording, try to speak into a bookshelf or cushions that will minimize the reverberations. The volume of different audio tracks in your video should be the same.

- Does the person know that I am going to interview them? Are they used to cameras? Make them feel comfortable by **instructing** them **where to look** (only if it's a message the person look straight into the camera. Normally you stand close beside the camera and she/he looks at you) and reassure her with small talk. Encourage her to **speak freely**. Filler words and pauses make the interview natural and authentic. This is better than rehearsed or memorized texts.
- If you use **clip-on microphones**, always pin them on your interviewee yourself but ask them for permission before you pin them on their clothes.
- If the person is seated, ask them to **sit on the front edge of the chair**. In this way the speaker appears more active.
- **Never** place the interviewee **close to a wall!** Create as much distance as possible. This blurs the background of the speaker and makes her/him more focused.
- **No zooming** in or out! Instead it is better to make several takes.
- **Close-Ups** make the film more interesting (try to aim at 40-50 % of close-ups).
- If you are interviewing several people or you make a pro/contra report, film one person **on the right side** and the next **one on the left side** of the frame.
- **Suspense:** Start your film with a highlight or a key moment in your story. Then deliver additional information (according to the four w-questions) and end your video again with something important. Everything that comes at the end will be remembered.

Video Editing

Editing is vital for your video. Through a selection of your material you highlight the relevant and get rid of the unimportant. You create suspense and rhythm. Before you start editing, get an overview on your gathered material. Delete the unusable clips and select your highlights. Make a list with all your clips you want to use and structure them according to your storyboard.

There are plenty of editing programs (Nero, WeVideo, iMovie, Final Cut etc.) and for each of them there are plenty of online tutorials to choose from. Just google or look for online tutorials of your program on Youtube. Whereas the first three are sufficient for most video productions, more ambitious filmmakers can invest in Final Cut or other programs that allow more and finer applications. For those of you who want to go even further, think about investing time and money in applications such as Adobe After Effects. This will allow even more features for post-production and special effects. Here are some basic editing tips:

- Takes should be at least **2 seconds to 10 seconds** long! But the more details on a picture, the longer it should be shown.
- **Array different takes next to each other** (close-up, wide shot, extreme close-up etc.).
- When using music, try to **cut in sync** with the music!
- Edit your audio files for free with Audacity <http://www.audacity.de>
- And most importantly: Be your hardest critic. Is this really exciting? **Kill your darlings!**

For further reading, here are some sites on video making:

- [BBC Journalism](#)
- [Videomaker](#)
- [Make use of](#)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/skills/interviewing>

<https://www.videomaker.com/article/1356-getting-started-the-seven-deadly-camera-sins>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-simple-tips-to-record-great-looking-home-videos/>

3.4 Graphics

Graphics have many benefits. They visualize numbers and make them more comprehensible. Interactive before/after images or quiz make the user more engaged. In 2017, the Team Learning and Networking will organize some events on (info-)graphics. Thereafter, this topic will be covered more in depth. So far you can check out the flowchart by MAZ or visit the following sites to use graphics in your work. Most of them are free to use.

- On [Flaticon](http://flaticon.com/) <http://flaticon.com/> you find an archive of **free icons** (but you have to give credit to the artist)
- Visualize **before/after pictures** on [Juxtapose](http://juxtapose.knightlab.com/) <http://juxtapose.knightlab.com/>
- **Animate** pictures of graphics with a repetitive simple movement on [Ezgif](http://ezgif.com/) <http://ezgif.com/> , [Mageagif](http://mageagif.com/) <http://mageagif.com/> or [Powtoon](http://www.powtoon.com/) <http://www.powtoon.com/>
- Create **interactive pictures** where users can discover audio tracks, text or images while hovering over the picture with their cursor on [Thinglink](http://thinglink.com/) <http://thinglink.com/>

- Compile a slideshow or **photo essay** on [Photosnack](http://photosnack.com/) <http://photosnack.com/> or [Animoto](http://animoto.com/) <http://animoto.com/>
- For diverse types of **diagrams** check out [Infoqr.am](http://infoqr.am.com/) <http://infoqr.am.com/> or [Datawrapper](http://datawrapper.de) <http://datawrapper.de>
- Create **complex infographics** on [Piktochart](http://piktochart.com/) <http://piktochart.com/> and **flowcharts** on [Gliffy](http://gliffy.com/) <http://gliffy.com/>
- Combine different types of data on **maps** with [Gischart](http://gischart.com/) <http://gischart.com/>
- Illustrate chronologic developments on a **timeline** <http://timeline.knightlab.com/> and show journeys or movements on a **storymap** <http://storymap.knightlab.com/>
- Create **quiz** or knowledge tests with [Apester](http://apester.com/) <http://apester.com/>

[Here](#) you find a list about which programs are working within SDC's intranet and sharewebs.

<https://www.shareweb.ch/group/Focal-Points/resources/layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/group/Focal-Points/resources/Documents/Multimediale%20Tools%20MAZs.xlsx&action=default>

After these practical tips and tricks on your different multimedia building blocks, the following tools will give them a common frame. Let's start with two interactive Scrollytelling tools: Pageflow and Klynt.

4. Multimedia Storytelling

4.1 Pageflow and Klynt

Pageflow and Klynt allow you to combine different media (text, image, video and graphics). A particular characteristic of these two tools is that they have many functions to actively engage the user of your product. Interactive functions in Pageflow are for example **Hotspots** where your user can hover with her/his cursor over hidden spots in a photo and discover audio tracks, images or text. You can also work with the **before/after function** to visualize transformations, or you can include **360° Degree panorama pictures**. Here are some recommendations when using Pageflow. Many of these recommendations work also for Klynt that is a bit more complex than Pageflow and works better for non-linear stories.

- **Place important** or for the user particularly interesting **chapters at the beginning!**

- **Dare a narrative introduction** with a story, anecdote or an illustrative case study.
- **Guide your reader!** Make transitions from chapter to chapter and use telling captions!
- A **rigorous selection** of your material creates suspense and tension!
- **Do not use intros for videos** in Pagelfow. Start right away with your interviewee.
- The mosaic function is better for Klynt than Pageflow.
- If possible, include so-called atmo sounds in your story (that are played as background music). They transport authenticity and can have a loosening effect. You can find atmo sound on pages like [Freesound](#) (but you have to give credit to the artist).
- **Attach additional and supplemental information in PDFs or Links.** This will keep your story shorter and more focused.

On www.pageflow.io you find many good examples of existing Pageflows. Pay special attention to how sound, text and video was used and how interactive parts were integrated.

4.2 The Audio Slideshow

The most important aspect when creating an audioslideshow is that sound and image match. This implies that the text of the slideshow has to be supported visually. When there is no image, you have to change the script. For example, when I interview someone and she/he is talking about her/his work, it is best to make a little walk in her/his work environment where she/he can point to different things. If the topic of discussion is something very abstract and cannot be shown in pictures, the slideshow is not the adequate choice (use the flowchart to decide which media is suited best). Here are some recommendations when using audioslideshows (see also the recommendation on video that apply also here):

- Each photo in the audioslideshow should be **shown between 4 and 15 seconds**. Make your audioslideshow **not longer than 3 or 4 minutes**.
- The audio will guide you through the story. That is why the quality of the audio is decisive! To create short pauses, record a few minutes of the room ambient after you are done with your voice over and use it between edits.

- If you use background music, adjust the volume to avoid distraction from the main content.
- Another important feature with the audioslideshow is that the audio can **transport movements**. For example, when showing a racecar you can overlay it with an engine sound.

For German-speaking readers visit [2470 Media](#) or [Rufposten](#) for good examples of audioslideshows.

<http://www.2470.media/portfolio/>

<http://rufposten.de/deza>

5. Conclusion and Further Resources

In 2017, the Learning & Networking team will continue to support multimedia inside SDC. It happily assists SDC staff in implementing multimedia in their daily work. To contact us click [here](#).

On the [shareweb](#) of Learning & Networking you find good examples of already existing multimedia products created to support the work at SDC. SDC staff finds more resources on the [Multimedia Group](#) on the Intranet. German-speaking readers can also visit [Rufposten](#) where you find a comprehensive introduction to multimedia storytelling with many examples. For inspiration visit the [Webby Awards](#) where you find a selection of award winning multimedia products.