DESKTOP VIDEO PRODUCTION TIPS

This document outlines tips for producing high quality personal capture videos in your office.

1 Poor lighting means you can't see the presenter properly. The camera is not level with his eyes.

2 The laptop height has been adjusted to be level with the presenter's eyes and he has 2 lamps on the desk to provide extra light.

3 The presenter is evenly lit using a combination of natural light and lamps in the room.

Source: http://wistia.com/blog/snazzy-on-webcam

FRAMING THE SHOT

- Head and shoulders look best. Put yourself in the centre of the frame. You may need to adjust your chair height or the angle of your computer monitor/web cam. The camera should be level with your eyes.

- Look at what is in the background. Is there anything that might be distracting to people watching the video? Should you tidy up your bookshelf?

LIGHTING

- Make sure you don't have a light or sun streaming in a window behind you as it will create a halo or silhouette effect and it will be difficult for viewers to see you.

- Lights directly above you can create bright highlights on your head. This can be distracting to the viewer. To fix this, try making your video at a time of day where you can take advantage of natural light.

- You may need to turn on lamps in your office to provide extra light, especially if it is later in the day. Angle the lamps so there aren't any sharp shadows on your face. Pointing lamps towards a wall can reduce the harshness of the light and create softer looking shadows.

- If you wear glasses, lights and the computer screen may reflect off them. You may need to change your position or the position of the lights to accommodate this. If you have an anti-reflective coating on your glasses then reflections will be minimized.

- Do a test capture and make sure the video isn't grainy due to lack of light.

SOUND

- Listen to the noises in your office. Is there any buzzing or humming you can remove? Do you need to shut a window? Unplug a fan? Turn off a fluorescent light? Turn off an air conditioner?

- Turn off your mobile phone, and unplug your office phone to avoid disturbances whilst recording.

- Are there student movements outside your office at certain times of day? Consider what time of day would be best to minimise background noises. Early in the morning or later in the afternoon are usually good times to schedule recordings.

- Find out where the microphone is on your computer. Do a test capture and listen back to see if you can hear yourself clearly. If not, you may need to purchase a lapel microphone that you can plug into the computer and clip to your shirt eg. http://www.videoguys.com.au/Shop/p/30214/vidpro-xm-l-lavalier-condensor-microphone-for-cameras-and-smartphones-vpxm-l.html

VOICE AND PRESENTATION

- Look directly at the camera: imagine you are talking to a friend or a student in your office.

- You will sound more natural if you speak to dot points rather than a word for word script.

- Place your notes close to the camera so your eyes do not move too far away when reading them.

- Pace yourself. Don't rush.

- Emphasise important words.

APPEARANCE

- Consider what colour/pattern you are wearing: fine stripes and patterns can look like they are moving on camera, and colours that are too bright can draw attention away from your face.

- Check yourself in the mirror before you film with particular attention to your teeth and hair.

- If you have oily skin, blot it before you film to minimise reflections and highlights on your skin. You can purchase skin blotting paper or powder from a pharmacy or department store.

OTHER TIPS

- Put a sign on your door: 'Recording in progress, please do not knock' to avoid disturbances whilst you are recording your video.

- If capturing Powerpoint slides with Echo, remove special effects and transitions from your slideshow as they tend not to come across as well on video.

- You may like to record a practice video and get a couple of your colleagues or an Instructional Designer to review it.

RESOURCES

ITAP Educational Best Practice

Best practices for Desktop Recording