

Intro. to Video for Field Work, and

A vision for the consumer
camcorder of the (near) future.

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Today:

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Practical Aspects of Video
- ◆ What Makes Field Work Special
- ◆ A short look at a vision beyond the consumer camcorder

A bit on my background

- ◆ Ph.D. at U.C. San Diego, Cognitive Science and Psychology.
- ◆ Advisor: Don Norman [Cognitive Science, a father of User Experience]
- ◆ Videotaped interactions and copiers.
 - » When unsure what to photograph, video captures the room.
- ◆ Studied videos of cockpit simulations,

Hank's background 2:

- ◆ Interval Research - investigated new "industries" for consumers, using IT.
- ◆ My main project: rethinking the recording of personal experience (the camcorder)
- ◆ Participated in extensive field studies of "consumers in the future"
- ◆ Usability lab, focus groups, chaired Human Subjects Committee
- ◆ Hank slogan: "If it's not on video, it didn't happen"

A taste of "Active Pack"



Hank's background 3:

- ◆ Returned to Chicago for UNext: virtual university (business courses).
- ◆ What's it like being an e-student?
 - » an e-instructor?
- ◆ Outfitted 4 observation facilities w/ eqpt.
 - » Was among biggest testing capabilities in USA
- ◆ 30 hour usability tests -- too much to fully analyze, even to watch.
- ◆ Independent as of 9/11. Consulting...

Practical Aspects of Video

- ◆ Tradeoffs:
 - » Video captures all, but only what it is pointed at, what microphones hear, & when it is turned on.
 - Heisenberg and video...
 - » Quality, cost, weight, size
 - » Not missing action vs drowning in tape
- ◆ Trust your friends or a good service department
 - » Video people tend to be helpful.
 - » Moving things (like tape & drives) break and wear.

Camcorder tradeoffs?

- ◆ Tape format [DV, Digital-8, Hi-8]
 - » Cost, quality, how common,
- ◆ Brand? [Sony, Canon, Panasonic, OEM (i.e., brand-only)]
- ◆ Tape brand: I like Sony professional, other pro, then big brands
- ◆ **DON'T REUSE TAPES IN FIELD!**
 - » (especially digital tapes)

Consider in a camcorder:

- ◆ Size (it matters, though maybe not as you think)
- ◆ Audio quality,
- ◆ Battery life (buy big (expensive) spares!)
- ◆ CCD, lens (more pixels, more "chips" -> better)
- ◆ Optical Image Stabilization (OIS) better than Electric (EIS)
- ◆ Flip out display?

Pick from:

- ◆ Small & cheap (Canon, perhaps Panasonic)
- ◆ Digital-8 (Sony or OEM Sony)
- ◆ Nice consumer grade (Sony PC-110, TRV-900; Canon Optura or GL-1)
- ◆ Prosumer (new Canon XL-1s [w/ Clearscan!], Sony VX-2000)
- ◆ Professional (not in scope of this talk)

IMPORTANT accessories:

- ◆ Small headphones (USE THEM!)
- ◆ External microphone.
 - » Short shotgun, wireless lavaliers, boundary layer
- ◆ A decent tripod: Quality (Manfrotto/Bogen)
 - » Quick release plate, good fluid head, size (travel?)
- ◆ Extra (charged) batteries for EVERYTHING.
- ◆ Extra (unused) recording tape.
- ◆ Neutral (skylight) filter to protect lens
- ◆ Gaffer tape, not duct tape.

Find yourself with more funds?

- ◆ Little things: More blank tape stock, more batteries, gaffer tape.
- ◆ More: Better microphones, better tripod, good cases. Media training, Use a videographer,
- ◆ Even more: Better camcorder (3 chip CCD, XLR [mic] inputs), video editing computer.

Things to consider

- ◆ Listen like a microphone (fans, El-trains, cat, ...)
- ◆ Light? [beware backlight, turn on lights, avoid camera lights]
- ◆ Shoot "B-roll" footage -- the building, the background, etc.
- ◆ Pack, check, re-check. Know your stuff.
- ◆ Camcorder shoots stills, just 30 per second.
- ◆ Backups: audio recorder; film & digital camera.

PRACTICE!

- ◆ Set up & break down camera, tripod.
- ◆ Open tape box, and change tape,
- ◆ Camcorder settings (What image stabilization does on *your* camera, fades, date, time, etc.)
- ◆ Try a full session on a team member. Make it feel real, so you experience and recover from mistakes.
- ◆ This is art. Skill matters.
- ◆ Shoot events for friends.

Practical Aspects of Video:

- ◆ To learn more:
 - » Magazines: Videomaker, DV
 - » Books: Focal Press
- ◆ Watch documentaries (take a course), learn styles.
 - » P.O.V. series on PBS
 - » I'm a big fan of Maysles brothers' documentaries

What Makes (video) Field Work Special?

- ◆ Recording as data, not MTV or CNN
 - » In America, everyone knows Cops, America's funniest...
 - » The more professional you look, more likely you're MSNBC.
- ◆ Sound, details matter, not cool'ness.
- ◆ Footage (!?)
 - » What to shoot, how much.

Have a second person

- ◆ Camera in corner captures all and nothing
- ◆ Be respectful, while capturing details.
- ◆ Camera person is active, though silent.
- ◆ Note what's special – runner's watch, hand signal or noise, etc.

Media release vs Consent.

- ◆ Media Release for lectures, “expert interviews”
 - » When no answer to “Where’s the research?”.
- ◆ In a study, probably want consent.
 - » Subjects get used to you
 - » You (and your team) get used to subjects, the activity,
 - » They get used to being filmed,
 - » But SHUT OFF if things happen.
 - » [You don’t want as much as they don’t]

Video data

Special ethical issues

- ◆ REALLY identifies people,
- ◆ Can shoot only hands, but then have voices
- ◆ Video in a talk is memorable.
- ◆ How will data be treated over time (ties to harm) – Who will see footage? When?
 - » Keep things simple.
- ◆ [Who owns the footage?]
- ◆ Consider: re-enact with confederates.

Video is unique

- ◆ Be careful: who you shoot & don't shoot.
 - » You're judging importance.
 - ◆ To some: MTV, 15 minutes of fame.
 - » People want to hear my story!
 - ◆ To some: “stealing the soul”
 - ◆ To some: Sixty Minutes, harmful
-
- ◆ Consider: Cover the lens cap (audio only)
 - ◆ If in doubt, go to pause
 - ◆ Be Professional

Tips:

- ◆ **ALWAYS flip erase tab when you remove a tape.**
- ◆ Don't zoom (or zoom very slowly & follow subject)
 - » Rather, quick pause then restart
- ◆ Have cellophane on new tapes started.
- ◆ Label the tape, not the box
- ◆ 30 seconds of “black” at tape's start & end.
- ◆ Carry a tape pencil

So you have it -- Now what?

- ◆ Watch it, listen.
- ◆ Log it
 - » Time consuming. Get to know footage vs save hours
- ◆ [Transcription tools]
- ◆ [Consider Filemaker or Oracle DB, with clips]
- ◆ Keep it organized.

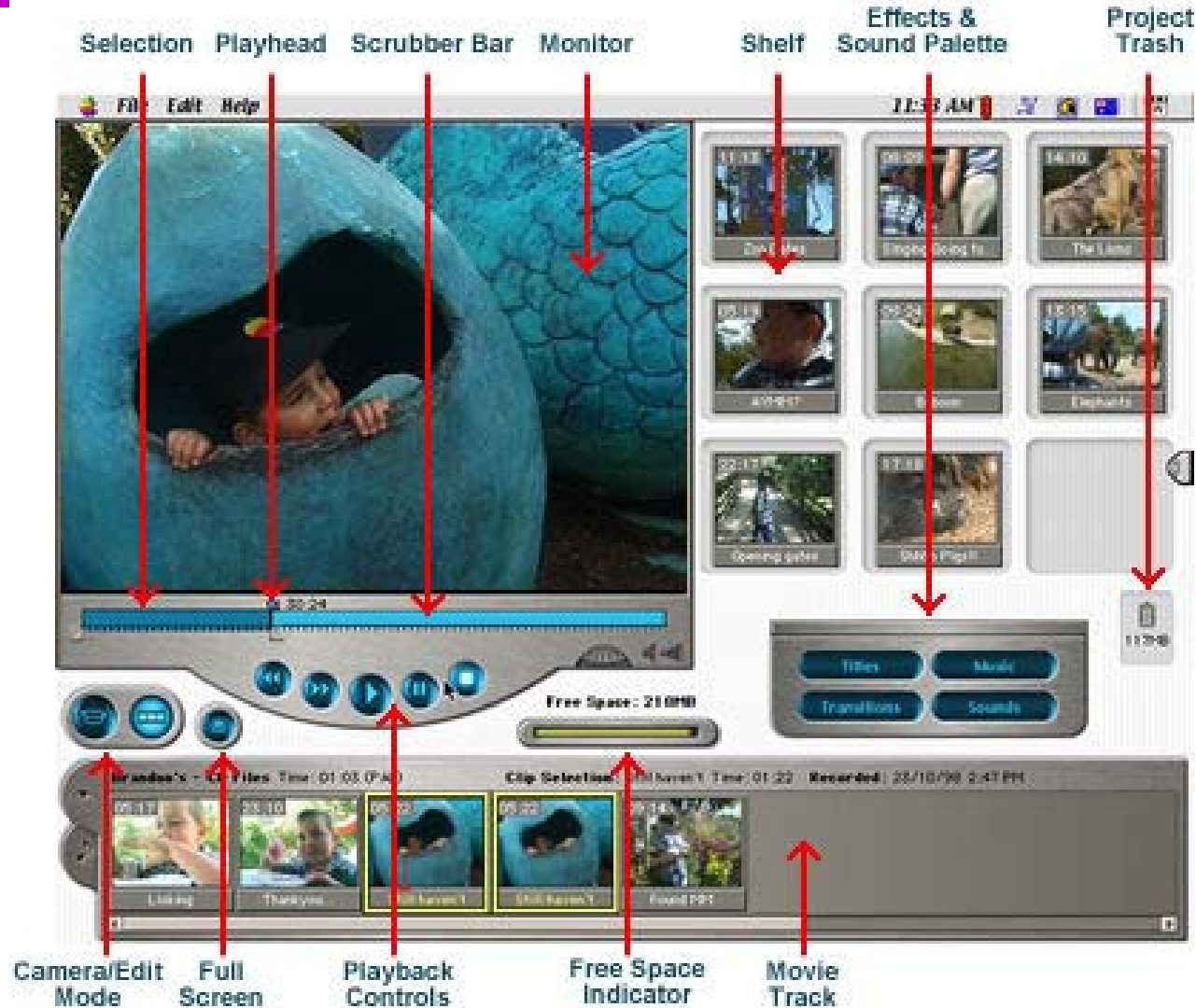
What will you do with it?

- ◆ Have it.
- ◆ Log it.
- ◆ Analyze the activity.
- ◆ Transcribe the audio. (maybe)
- ◆ Create highlights tape(s). (maybe)
- ◆ Describe it.
- ◆ ...

Editing Tools?

- ◆ Quick/dirty: iMovie ["A reason to buy a Mac"]
 - » Free w/ all Macs (as is Firewire)
 - » Basic functionality, clean interface.
- ◆ Almost pro at low cost: FinalCut Pro (Mac)
- ◆ "The standard" - Adobe Premiere
- ◆ Low end for a PC? Ulead, or Quicktime Professional

An iMovie Screenshot



Computer video formats?

- ◆ DV (high quality, but lots of space)
- ◆ Quicktime (good encoding tools, player uncommon)
- ◆ Real (most popular player)
- ◆ Windows Media Player (efficient)
- ◆ MPEG-1 (designed to run off [slow] CD-ROM)
- ◆ MPEG-2 (for DVDs)
- ◆ MPEG-4, DIVX:-) (the next generation)

Demo time:

- ◆ Avoid barf footage
 - » Pan slowly
 - » Zoom slowly, or move rather than zoom
- ◆ Consider recording height
- ◆ Tripod vs handheld?
 - » Minimize shake.
 - » Good tripod -> no hysteresis
- ◆ Confidence , experience, shows
 - » Al's Castro story?

Other things

- ◆ Backlight, enough light
- ◆ Sound,
- ◆ Height, angle matter
- ◆ Experiment! You'll see the difference
- ◆ If a problem, ask. People are usually nice.

Exercises for later: Meet your camcorder

- ◆ Start, stop, restart
- ◆ Headphone/mic (really attend to sound)
- ◆ Changing battery, tape,
- ◆ Backlight, manual focus, screen vs. viewfinder,
- ◆ Handhold vs tripod, and transition,
- ◆ Zooming,
- ◆ Watch on a big TV (motion is barfier)

Exercises for later (2): Shoot a real interview

- ◆ Where is camera looking? When?
 - » Talking heads compelling, but gets old.
 - » Tight for emotion, or wide to get both.
 - » Though don't miss the key comment.
- ◆ The “in camera” edit.
- ◆ Look in viewfinder? LCD screen?
- ◆ Shoot “B-roll” - the room and building, a sign, interviewer intently listening (to nothing)

Thanks to: (people who I learned from)

- ◆ Interval: Charles (Bud) Lassiter, Kim Johnson, Sue Faulkner, Chris Seguine
- ◆ Famous folk: Al Maysles, Rick Smolan
- ◆ UNext: Nell Lundy, George Tuft