UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER⌗

ECMM704- CW Two- Promo Clip for the MSc Multimedia Course

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0. Introduction

The current world is consumed with technological advances and visual content and so the demand for creative and inspiring proposals are in demand. Videos and advertisements are created to encourage viewers but this can only be done through combining ideas, sounds and video effectively.

In this coursework, a 20 second promotional video is produced for the MSc Multimedia Course which is aimed at potential overseas students. This report will discuss the planning, designing and producing of the video as well as any problems that may occur.

As the video is based on The University of Westminster, it was thought to keep the current theme and keep as close to the branding as possible. It has a very simplistic feel only using few colours and has a noticeable logo of and gate to identify the institution. The font type was identified as Futura by researching into the Westminster.ac.uk CSS files and this will be used in order to maintain the visual relationship between the video and the University. By distinguishing these few points as well as achieving quality video material and effective sound tracks, it is possible to create a promo clip that successfully fulfils its brief.

1. Assists

Suitable assists and footage must be acquired before being able to start any post production based editing work on Adobe Premiere or any other applications.

1.1 Recorded Footage

The Footage was acquired using 2 SLR cameras. The first camera used was the Canon 500D with a 18-55mm lens shooting at 1080p @ 20fps to make sure that the footage was captured at the best quality the camera can record in terms of frame rate and size. This is Full HD which currently is the best resolution supported for online viewing. The second camera utilised was the Canon 60D with a 35mm Lens attached also shooting at 1080p shooting at its best of 25fps. [1]

Footage was captured of different parts of the campus students would use while studying the MSc Multimedia course and also some of the surrounding areas. Places the footage was captured were strategically planned with a good idea of the story board in mind however some shots were also captured just to experiment with later.

A variety of measures were taken while capturing the footage. A tripod was used to stabilise and stop camera shake. A day with clear sky was chosen to capture the outdoor scenes and special measures were taken to make sure that the sun was in the best possible location at the time of the shoot. This was done using Google sky map which allows its user to see a detailed trajectory of the sun and the placement in the sky on a mobile device. The shots had to be taken at different angles to be able to capture the scene.

Not all footage that was captured was useable as it proved difficult to judge the focus and exposure from the small LCD screens in live view modes. Being dependant on this, it was thought that the clip would suffice but after transferring and viewing it on a bigger screen, minor imperfections may be detected. Although this can't be helped fully, it was possible to overcome this

by taking a number of precautionary shots of the same scene and being careful to adjust the focus whilst recording.

Action Safe areas were carefully considered while recording making sure the main actions was within an estimated 90% of the screen. Even though most people will be viewing this video online, viewing it on a mobile or smart phone (4:3 SD standard) is also sought after which can have very different aspect ratio to the original shot (16:9 HD widescreen). This however, is not much of a problem for modern technology or web browsers anymore as the 16:9 aspect ratio is now fully supported.

1.2 Processing Video Material

Having recorded the footage, an encoding process had to take place due to the difference of frame rate taken from the two cameras. Therefore, before taking the footage into Premiere, all the footage was re-encoded using Adobe Media Encoder to alter the files to a 24p/23.976 frame rate. If this wasn't carried out, a lot of complications would have occurred with working with mixed frame rate footage in Premiere. By using a 24fps, it allows more flexibility as it is the most widely supported HD frame rate online. Users will be able to download it faster than videos that are in 30fps and it will not be too noticeable when up scaling from 20fps (Canon 500D).

1.3 Fonts and Branding Design

It was difficult to find the University of Westminster brand guidelines as the official documentation is hard to find or not made public. As previously mentioned in the introduction it was established that the university used Futura and its variations as their main type face. Fortunately these fonts are available on the iMacs at the University and did not require purchasing. However they are available for windows users to purchase from font sites such as myfonts.com. [2][3]

Research had to be done to identify materials which can be used to promote the course. The School of Electronics and Computer Science Postgraduate courses brochure was helpful as the brief and accurate explanations of the school and its courses were given within it. However the images and some module information used in it seemed to be dated as the brochure had been published in 2011. [4]

Further research was carried out by identifying the University's filming and course promotional video styles. This was done online on the University website and some similarities of the brand ideas, video styles and transition methods were easily identified with slight variations. [5]

2. Music and Sound effects

Having acquired the video footage, it was important to look for background sounds which would be suitable for the promo video. By listening to music, it is possible to gain a feel of what the video should look like and the pace it should be taking. Creative commons and royalty free sites were used to gather potential sound effects and background music. The following sounds were initially chosen:

- Think positive by DefectiveContact [6]
- Elegant Background Music by Akashic Records [7]

Through listening to the music repeatedly to gain inspiration and ideas, it was in the end not suitable to use due to the tempo and feel of the song. The track "Oursvince_-_Shine__Orchestral_Pop_Rock_Version_"[8] was eventually selected as it had a mellow beginning and had a dramatic change of tempo within the track which then finished off subtly rather than abruptly. The track however, was around 3 minutes long and of course had to be edited.

3. Working in Premiere

A New Project was launched in Premiere Pro CS6. The Scratch Disk location was set to the desktop of the computer within a folder created for this project. A new sequence was created using the 'DSLR 1080p 24'from the available presents.

All the assists were organised into folders before importing. They were tested by inserting them into the timeline, making sure the time codes of all the assists were fine and the quality was preserved. It was also checked to find that there were no mismatch error visuals (red line across the timeline) or dialogs presented.

3.1 Editing Music

It was originally thought to take parts from the beginning, middle and end of the sound track but it proved to be difficult due to the very short time scale provided. Nevertheless, the sound has to flow and the mid-section of the song was clipped which incorporated both the calming introductory phase which then led to an upbeat and faster paced rhythm. Then a clip was cut from the end.

 The two sections were carefully trimmed with precision, making used of the "show audio time units" from the programme monitor menu option and using the timeline zoom control bar to see the wave form. The jog in the programme monitor is useful to hear the sounds as it gave manual control. The volume of the cuts did not match so an audio transition effect "Constant Power" was used to provide a seamless transition between the two cuts which resolved the issue.

A manual fade in and out was created using the key frames to gradually raise the volume from zero decibels and fade out at the end. The audio clip after cutting and trimming all the possible unnecessary extras was 22 seconds. However, due to time limitations set, the duration had to be reduced to 20 seconds therefore the speed of the cuts was increased to 110% which made the pace of the music slightly faster which made it sound better. This on the other hand, may be subject to taste.

Some original sounds were kept such as the scenes including the bus and the tax. The sounds required a basic editing as described above.

3.2 Editing Video

Once the music was ready, video clips were browsed through using the source monitor. In and out points of the usable sections of the videos were marked and dragged onto the timeline. This helped organise the clips. The clips were then trimmed and arranged on the timeline using the selection tool, ripple edit tool and the razor tool. This process was very tedious as clips had to match the soundtrack with the storyboard in mind.

Time mapping: To make this possible, some of the footage had to be sped up but fortunately it is not noticeable unless the video is scrutinised for imperfections. It is particularly noticeable at 04:10 – 05:21 frames when the students were walking down the stairs. However no one seemed to have noticed the change of speed as it was carefully chosen when the clip should speed up and slowdown. The change of speed had to be made instantly on this clip as not enough time was available for gradual change due to the lady walking past the camera.

Some clips were too short in terms of usable material so a clever idea occurred where the cuts were copied and place next to one another and the speed was reversed by right clicking on the clip and checking the option in the **speed and duration** dialog box. This can be seen in the nested clip with the student's hands and the Mac keyboard background clip from 12:06- 14:00 frames.

Brightness and contrast: There were noticeable variations in the brightness of some of the darker and brighter clips and had to be reduced in some of the sun lit scenes to match the rest of the clips. Examples include the taxi and the entrance scene. The variations are slightly more agreeable now.

Cross dissolve: After analysing the various transitions available to use and researching the University of Westminster video transition styles, a decision was made to use cross dissolve as the main transition effect as it best tells the story. It can mean many things such as at the same time at another place this is what is happening. It also helps the viewer move into the change with ease. Transitions requires head footage to roll from one clip to another with moving pictures and in the case of this project, all the clips have head footage to work with and if not then the trick is to overlap clips.

Effects control monitor: The effect control monitor helps edit and trim the clips with great precision and also allows the users to make changes to the effects and preview them before applying.

Masking using dynamic link with Adobe after effects: Unfortunately, Premiere has very limited masking capabilities so the logo at the beginning of the video had to be taken into after effects for editing. This was done by right clicking the logo, using the dynamic link by right clicking the footage and selecting the replace with the After Effects composition. Once this is done, it opens After Effects and allows the user to create and edit the After Effects project and update any changes on the Premiere timeline. The Technological Innovation logo was created using this function. Any complex masking should be done in After Effects due to its capability and flexibility to animate more freely.

Crop effect: The only masking option in Premiere Pro is the crop effect. This was used only to show the variations of the two methods that can be used. It also worked out to not make much of a difference due to the speed it has been used for example: In the entrance scene when the lady walks past the text. As she walks past, it will clear the text from the screen. The only problem with this effect is that it does not feather the edges which would have created a better effect if it did.

Dip to black effect: When this effect is applied to the beginning of a clip it acts as a dip from black and not a dip to black. However the current University videos do not dip from or to black but due to the nature of the clip, it is required that they were slightly darkened at the beginning and end to make the logo and the text more prominent. This adjustment was made in the effects control monitor by changing the start and end position respectively.

Push: This effect was applied to the icons [9] in 10:10-14:00 fames. It helped emphasise their relevance to the scene where students are required to use the creative suite applications and they are all available on the computers at the University. This is further explained in the texts and through video clips of students working at the computers as illustrated in the video. The sizes of the videos

were reduced and moved next to each other keeping the same distance in between. The push effect had to be adjusted at the beginning of the clip so that it would come in from the bottom of the screen.

Fast blur: The affect was also applied to the icons to give it motion and resemble a slight camera focus effect to emerge gracefully on screen. The fast blur that was adjusted to the effect will take place on the motion when the icon leaves off the screen.

Edge feather: This effect was applied to the smaller videos so that the blend with the background scene was smoother.

Text: Text was used in most of the scenes to give message to the audience which are relevant to the course. The size of the Text varied and only two variations were used Futura light and Futura book. The colour of the font was white and a drop shadow was applied to help contrast on light backgrounds and the opacity of the text content was lowered to 95% so that it would blend in to the scene slightly.

Nesting: Once each of the sections were completed on the main timeline, they were selected and nested so that they are easier to view and manage in terms of layers as it helps keep the timeline tidy. Effects can be applied to them as a whole which is very effective in speeding up the process.

Title and action safe guides: These were always turned on throughout the creation of the video to make sure video, text and graphics were contained within the safe areas respectively.

Saving the video: The in and out points of the video was set to 20sec and the clips that needed to be seen on the last frame was extended by another frame so that the information would be the focus if the player would stop on the last frame.

The video was then exported using The H264 compression using the YouTube HD 1080p 23.976 format as the University of Westminster uploads the files to YouTube. This compression is good for most online players as it is of high quality. It has been saved as an MP4 file format and the file name is MSc Promo Video.mp4.

4. Improvements

The following improvements can be made:

1. An unintentional mistake was made in recording the footage at 20 frames per second on the Canon 500D. It was assumed that the camera would record a minimum of 24 fps. In the future it would be best to use only one camera or use the same settings on both by possibly dropping the fames size to 720p if there is no set requirement. This would also save a lot of space in terms of file size.
2. Jerky panning movements were made in the recording due to the stiff tripod which probably would have worked better if lubricant was applied to the joints or it was loosened a bit more.
3. In the taxi scene there was rubbish piled up next to the bins and it didn't look pleasing to the eye. It would have been best to reshoot the scene, but could have been proved difficult due to the change in lighting.
4. It would have been helpful if the University brand guidelines were made available publically for the students as more and more companies do such as UCA, Facebook and twitter.
5. 20 second time limitation was very difficult to work with. However it did help teach a lot in terms of how best to try and create a promotional campaign with extreme constraints. It

makes the developer think critically about what these 20 seconds should contain and how best to not overload the viewer's memory.

The time limitation did not help with creating a complete in-depth idea of what it's like to study in the University of Westminster on an MSc Multimedia course. If more time was allocated the following points would be considered:

> 1. Adding more beautiful scenes of things to see locally.
>
> 2 .Footage of more facilities that are available to the students in terms of technology, learning materials and space.
>
> 3. Student and staff feedback or messages of how good the course is. This would have been very encouraging for others to join in.
>
> 4. If there were footages of student work being showcased at an end of year show or event.

If these aspects could be updated then a better and more professional video would have been achieved.

6. More time consuming and creative transitions could have been used just to keep the viewers engaged with the video as well as space items and clips out so they are given time to soak in the information given to them.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, a 20 second video promoting the MSc Multimedia course has successfully been produced. The video was made recognisable for International viewers by adding the signature red bus and black Taxi that marks the University of Westminster as being a UK institution. The University's logo was present through multiple scenes of the video and at the end there is a link to the international application section of the Westminster University website and the course itself. The video was made to encourage viewers to study in London by showing what the course has to offer as well as the environment and what will be studied.

A lot of mistakes were made in the process of creating this promotional video. However if these mistakes were not made then it would have been impossible to know how to resolve them in the future. This coursework was a great learning experience in terms of research, filming and editing video footage in post. It also makes it possible to understand and appreciate the hard work that goes into video editing and motion graphics.

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