

AN INTRODUCTION TO A/V

Definition and History – Analogue, 35 mm slides, 2 projectors and a sound recorder to record/playback sound track and pulses.

The earliest form of A/V and still popular today, was known as PHOTO HARMONY – based on a series of slides that worked ‘harmoniously’ together in a ‘sequence’. The next stage in development was to add music/sound effects and dissolves/visual mixes between slides.

The Digital Revolution

The standard software in the A/V Community (both Nationally and Internationally in Competitions) is PTE (Pictures to Exe). (a 30-day free trial is available and costs around £120 for a downloadable Deluxe version (see <https://www.wnsoft.com/en/picturestoexe/buy/>). PTE is now in its 9th Version). *However, PTE can only be used with PCs.* Good News! A good choice of software for Sound is AUDACITY – (available as a free download).

While recognising that many members of the Club are Mac users, dedicated non-PTE software is available. Janey Devine, a Mac user, has produced A/Vs very successfully (including the use of movie footage), and is knowledgeable about the appropriate software.

KEY SKILLS NEEDED IN PRODUCING A/Vs.

While obviously the software chosen is an important *initial* issue in producing A/Vs, because of the rivalry between PCs and Mac – the choice will have to be that of the individual. However, there is plenty of advice on hand. Carole and myself are dedicated PC users.

The proposed purpose of future workshop-based sessions will be to concentrate on the *creative aspects of A/V production*, (irrespective of the software used), and the *acquisition of the necessary skills involved*. We plan to cover the following:

(1) PHOTO HARMONY. Technically this is the simplest form of A/V which involves combining images (PDIs) usually with a basic soundtrack comprising one or two pieces of music. Sound effects may also be included.

(2) Whether creating a Photo Harmony production or a more sophisticated documentary A/V – in both cases finding a suitable ‘do-able’ subject appropriate for the A/V medium is paramount. The most popular are usually based on a *PROJECT* that ‘tells a story’. Popular subjects include family or

social history and documentaries on a very wide range of subjects. Humour seems to be less popular – probably because it is one of the most difficult of the genres to do well.

(3) **PHOTOGRAPHY** – Access to basic image manipulation is needed e.g Photoshop Elements. The new Windows 10 image software is simple, accessible and invaluable. (Preferably a combination of both). (Today HD (or even 4K) movie footage with synchronised sound and shot on DSLRs can now be included *if relevant*).

(4) **SOUND RECORDING**. Basic skills in sound recording are necessary.

(5) **EDITING** – i.e. the process of constructing and ‘telling the story’ – (editing is probably the least recognised of the key skills). However, while it may sound rather unexciting, arguably editing is the most *creative* and satisfying part of A/V production.

IMPORTANT GENERAL POINTS

All the above components are *equally important* – (i.e. it is vital to recognise that while photography is important, A/V production is *not just about* Photography). As with many other branches of Photography, producing A/Vs ideally calls for *well thought-out projects* and good ‘do-able’ ideas together with the acquisition of new skills such as Sound recording and Editing.

FUTURE PLANS – SUGGESTIONS

(1) Initially to make a Digital Photo Harmony Production based on a collection of PDI’s either shot specially or scanned from 35mm slides.

(2) Finding a suitable piece(s) of music and sound effects - (if the latter are required).

(3) Suggest running monthly workshops – initially to introduce the software (projected on large screen) to get people started – then to run the workshops as problem-solving sessions and for reviewing individual work/work in progress. The discussion of ideas for A/Vs is another invaluable group activity.

(4) Long term to show work at an annual Club night. For the more adventurous members: to enter competitions and/or to prepare for RPS/PAGB accreditations.

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