

Storytelling with Video Marketing – Tools Tips Sheet

These are tools I have personal experience with or which come highly recommended to me by colleagues or trusted sources. But like most marketing and web tools, things change so check prices, availability and features for yourself. Many of the tools mentioned are free, others are relatively low cost. When it comes to equipment, like mics – you tend to get what you pay for. But not always! I have an excellent \$30 one. Don't assume you have to buy pro or 'prosumer' to get high quality. Also, the tools you will use are better than anything pricey, complex or complicated that gathers dust.

I'm always looking for more and newer tools to add to this list – email me at: jburke@intellcraftresearch or Tweet me your fave tools [@theinfohound1](https://twitter.com/theinfohound1)

VIDEO

Video Creation Software – different than pure, video editing software, these tools claim to do it all – creation with algorithmic magic

Animoto - <http://animoto.com/> Lite version is free, w/ 30sec video cap and limited video styles; Animoto does the work of taking your images (photos +/- video clips) and creating slick video using their algorithms and templates. Tool includes music tracks; versions/pricing available for Education + Nonprofits (apply for free upgraded access)

GoAnimate - <http://goanimate.com/> create your own custom animated videos; hugely popular tool with templates, characters/avatars, backdrops, audio and dubbing; free trial, then various paid options (educational and government account options available)

PowToon - <http://www.powtoon.com/> - whiteboard animations, cartoons; easy to use; free version has PowToon branding + other limited options; educational pricing available; basic accounts from \$19/mo

Screencast, screen capture for videos:

Jing – <http://www.techsmith.com/jing.html> - free, downloadable software for screen capture and short screencast videos (the free, lite, little brother to Snagit and Camtasia – same company) ; 5 min video limit; easy to use

AwesomeScreenShot - <http://awesomescreenshot.com/> - browser plugin/extension to capture either whole web page or portion and annotate quickly

Screencast-o-matic - <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/> - free version, nothing to install; or use the downloadable app; free ver has 15 min max recording and free hosting (does include their watermark); Pro version is very cheap (\$15/yr)

Snagit – also by Techsmith (see Jing, Camtasia) – a more robust screen capture and screencasting tool with editing features; not free, but not very pricey

Video Apps for Smartphones, Tablets:

FiLMiC Pro [*THE app for turning your smart device into a camcorder, adjusting exposure, focus, audio levels*), Directr, 8MM, Adobe Voice, iMovie, Pics2Mov, Vine

PromptSmart Pro – the teleprompter software app; it has speech recognition for better text scrolling onscreen; the voicetrack follows your words and scrolls the onscreen text in real time. Works on iPhones and iPads. [\$10]

Video Editing:

YouTube Editor - <http://www.youtube.com/editor/> - built right in to the largest video platform where you're already sharing videos! Trim, adjust levels, add effects, sway soundtracks right in YT. Very simple and basic.

YouTube also gives extra tools to nonprofits (e.g. the Donate button to add to videos, ad credits <https://www.youtube.com/nonprofits> + <http://www.google.com/grants/>) as well as a huge audience, easy tools and serious advantages in being found in search results. Don't ignore YouTube.

Windows Live Movie Maker (v12) – comes pre-installed on many Windows PCs, simple to use, basic editing [*double check – it may no longer come with Windows 8 and later*]

Loopster – <http://www.loopster.com/> - free version, up to 10 min videos, 3GB storage, Loopster watermark

VSDC Free Video Editor – powerful, plenty of tools, but lacking in documentation on how to best learn and use; Available via: http://download.cnet.com/VSDC-Free-Video-Editor/3000-13631_4-75764187.html

Kate's Video Toolkit – free, all-in-one audio/video toolkit to cut, join, mix and add effects; Available via: http://download.cnet.com/Kate-s-Video-Toolkit/3000-2139_4-10628194.html

Avidemux –open-source, free video editor for simple editing and related tasks. <http://fixounet.free.fr/avidemux/>

FileLab Video Editor - <https://www.filelab.com/video-editor> easy to use, no editing knowledge needed

FlixMaster - <http://www.flixmaster.com/> - cloud-based for editing + publishing

Kaltura – <http://corp.kaltura.com/> - open source online video platform

Magisto - <http://www.magisto.com/> - turn photos and videos into movies quickly using prebuilt themes and effects

For commercial/paid video editing software, these are the biggest names for consumer and 'prosumer' use – you probably don't need the absolute latest edition either, so save by getting last year's release. Buying only the download version vs. having the disc is usually cheaper as well.

Sony Vegas Movie Studio – [not the Pro version] Suite 12 \$50, Suite 13 \$60-90 [*I own ver 12*]

Corel Video Studio – X7 \$35, X8 \$100

Pinnacle Studio - Studio 17 \$25-30 / Ultimate 17 \$90-100, Studio 18 \$50 / Ultimate 18 \$120

CyberLink Power Director - ver12 \$35-45, ver 13 \$50-80

Adobe Premier or Premier Elements - \$50-80

AVS Video Editor - <http://www.avs4you.com/AVS-Video-Editor.aspx> - trim, cut, merge, mix videos; apply effects, audio, text or subtitles; supports all video formats [\$40-60]

Final Cut Pro - www.apple.com/finalcutpro A dynamic editing interface — enhanced for the Retina display on the MacBook Pro [pricey]

Screenflow – for the Mac; also does screen capture. A great tool if you're already on the Mac and want more than iMovie. [\$100]

[For its price - \$299 for PCs – I don't recommend Camtasia Studio. It is easy to use and very powerful for video editing as well as screen recording – but there are other powerful tools at much lower price points The Mac version is cheaper –but the two are not identical products. TechSmith does make other good tools.]

CaptionTube - <http://captiontube.appspot.com/> create captions for your YouTube videos; free; easy to use; gives viewers a transcript to read as well as more text available to index for search.

Handbrake - <https://handbrake.fr/> - open source video transcoder; to convert videos into other formats, especially those that are better compressed and ready for online sharing; if you need to go from an MP4 to a H.264 or vice versa. This is THE tool to get the great video you shot on your devices ready for the web – because if you don't do the coding and digitizing right, your video is no good. Plus, it's FREE

Video Hosting: because sometimes you need more control over your videos than YouTube offers

YouTube is great for traffic, showing up in search results and it's free. But they can, and do, take videos down all the time for no real reason. Plus, if you need to make a video private for any reason, or want a better player experience or more control over viewing on your website, there are other options.

[Vimeo](#), Vimeo Pro

[Easy Video Suite](#) – may not support HTML5 or other newer video features; also includes editing, recording, rendering and uploading.

[Wistia](#) – professional video hosting, analytics and video marketing tools; plus their blog is a wonderful treasure trove of lessons, tidbits, video hacks and great education on creation, editing and marketing with videos

[Yuvid](#) – not a host, just a super slick video player; host the videos on Amazon S3 or other storage

Equipment:

Tripods + stabilizers: It's crucial for video to be stable, more so even than photos. Tripods are very important if you are shooting with a DSLR camera – they are harder to hold steady in the hand vs a camcorder. There are dedicated, fluid, easy to move tripod heads specifically for video, but you can make do with a standard tripod.

e.g. the Sunpack – a cheap, lightweight, easy to pack tripod with a fluid level for keeping things perfectly horizontal. \$15-25

Magnus or Manfrotto – heavier duty tripods, hold larger cameras and equipment up to 15-20lbs

Joby Griptight - Tripod Mounts – small, ultra-portable, spring-loaded, clips on to most smartphones and attaches to all standard tripods



iOgrapher – iPad (Air, Mini, older models) plus iPhone cases for shooting stable video, connecting to tripods, and with 'shoe' mounts for mics, lights

CaddieBuddy – case and tripod mounts for tablets, including flexible arm and clamps for attaching to tables/benches

GorillaPod – flexible leg tripods in various sizes, wrap around objects for solo shooting in odd locations, or table tops



Mini Action Stabilizer – a mount for turning your smartphone into a steadycam, for stable, moving action shots. A bit pricey, but very cool and useful for certain types of video creation. Works with GoPros too. [\$60-70, B&H Photo]

Cameras:

LogiTech webcams – the C920 records in full 1080 HD video w/ high quality Zeiss lens, autofocus, can also use on a tripod [\$70]; also see C310, C615, C930

Canon Vixia series- affordable, consumer line of HD capable camcorders with mic inputs (*being able to plug in an external mic is essential – most cameras' onboard mics are awful*) Sony also has a good line of affordable HD camcorders. But beware, most of the better 'prosumer' HD camcorders are in the \$1000-1800 range; and ones that are much cheaper have poorer video quality or don't accept a microphone.

Digital SLR Cameras – they have powerful sensors that can produce video that looks as good, or better, than dedicated camcorders that cost 2x the money. Canon's Digital Rebels, T4i and above are all good options – if you can afford it, buy the latest model in the series.

GoPros – not just for snowboarding or surfing! Amazing, indestructible, super portable with great picture quality. Time lapse videos in a snap, wide angles, great for b-roll. They take external microphones and the internal mic isn't too bad for close-up work.

Smartphones, tablets – perfectly capable of shooting high quality video and you always have it handy! Just please, please, always shoot video in landscape mode. Not →

Lighting:

Shooting next to a window with nice natural light, filtered through the window is great and free! Shooting outside is wonderful, just don't shoot at high noon or with too bright sunshine. Don't have the light directly behind whatever you are shooting, have it behind you and the camera.

If you need additional lighting or are doing interviews or face-to-face, on-camera shooting – get some lights set up for photo/video:

CowBoy Studio or LimoStudio – basic 3-light kits for photo +/- or video

e.g. the LimoStudio 600W Umbrella Light kit w/ 3 lights, \$60-70; or the full studio kit with green screen, white background, 2 softboxes, (4) lights total for \$150

DIY Studio Light Kit – clamp lights from the hardware store, 150W floods or CFLs, extension cords + Light Stands from Cowboy Studio. See this brilliant [DIY Lighting Hacks video from Wistia](#)



AUDIO

Audacity - <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> - open source, cross-platform, the one tool you must have for free audio recording; use any mic (USB or into your PC's mic jack) and start recording; edit audio; save as an MP3 (with the LAME encoder download); also check out their forums and SIGs for help with audio projects

[<http://forum.audacityteam.org/viewforum.php?f=66&sid=7414b54316a787b44d520b582716f801>]

Auphonic - <https://auphonic.com/> - audio post production tool/web service for podcasts, radio shows, screen casts; can also get as an app from Apple or Google; can do intelligent leveling, normalization, restoration; makes chapter marks, metadata; auto content deployment via Dropbox, (s)FTP, Amazon S3, YouTube, SoundCloud, Libsyn, Archive.org; Free for 2 hours of audio processed per month, if need more can purchase one-time or recurring credits

New BlueFX - suite of audio tools to help clean your audio recordings (clean or clear hiss, pops, background noises) and will integrate with most other audio tools, such as Audacity and GarageBand, ~\$60

Soundation - <http://soundation.com/> create music online; like a web-based music studio with recording, effects, virtual instruments and free loops and sounds.

iTalk Recorder – <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/italk-recorder/id293673304?mt=8> ; free app; full-featured recording app; email recordings from the app; very simple interface

HT Recorder - <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ht-professional-recorder/id292413948?mt=8> - [NOT a free app, but if you watch for promotions from Apple or via Lifestacker or other sites, may find a free version]; captures sound even at distance and whispers, auto skips silence during recording;

Audio equipment:

It's **critical** to get the highest quality microphone you can afford that works with your other equipment – good sound quality matters more online than even a good image or video – **really!** You do tend to get higher quality with higher cost – with a few exceptions (the ATR lav mics are great for <\$30; the Blue mics for computer-based audio work). The microphone built into camcorders, DSLRs and even your iPhone, iPad or Droid all pretty much ... suck. Well, your phones and tablets are good if the thing you are shooting video of is directly in front of you, less than 3 feet away. But you really want to be able to input sound from a dedicated audio device into your video recording equipment, or use a secondary, outside sound recording, like a [Zoom](#). You can record all your audio into this external source and match it up with audio from the camera when you edit. More work but really good sound. For less work, get a good mic and be able to plug it into your camera!

These are good quality brands to look for in mics:

Blue Microphones – Yeti, Snowball; USB mics to plug into computers; great for doing voice overs for presentation style videos, webinars, interviews, or podcasts



AudioTechnica – the ATR3350 is an omni-directional lavalier or lapel microphone, 3.5MM jack (with an adapter can be used in smartphones and tablets too); ATR2100 – cardioid mic, handheld, USB jack; ATR2500 –Cardioid USB mic, ATR 2020 USB cardioid; AT875R Shotgun mic



Sennheiser – e.g. the MKE400 on-camera shotgun mic, E835 handheld dynamic cardioid mic, the Sennheiser line of wireless Lav mics are among the best and most popular

Azden – SMX10 stereo on-camera mic, SGM-990 shotgun mic, plus their many wireless systems for handheld and lavalier mics; check out the Azden wireless lavalier mics [WM Pro, \$150-160, B&H Photo]

Rode – NTG1, NTG 2, NTG 3 are all excellent (and high-end) condenser shotgun mics; SmartLav+ for smartphones, Rode VideoMic Pro on-camera (DSLR or camcorder) shotgun mic, Rode VideoMic shotgun w/ Rycote mount



Sescomm – adapters for mics, e.g. the iPhone MIC35-1 is a 3.5MM male jack into the headphone port of a smartphone, w/ a 3.5MM female mic input, 3.5MM headphone input (*split audio inputs and outputs so can plug a mic into the headphone jack and record – you can't just plug a mic into a smartphone or tablet headphone jack*)

STORY

Storyboard That - <https://www.storyboardthat.com/> - online storyboard creating app; drag-n-drop interface; a graphic organizer for telling linear, concise stories; Free version includes thousands of images, up to 2 storyboards/wk, 3 and 6 cell storyboards, export to PPT w/ their watermark

Story Creator – easy story book maker app for kids, educators; create your stories with photos, text, audio, video; upload photos, videos from common sources (Facebook, Dropbox, Flickr)

StoryBook - <http://storybook.en.softonic.com/> - free software to help organize threads of story lines, characters, scenarios for any complex writing, not just books; color-coded graphic organizer, not a word processor; (open-source, but not supported by original developer anymore)