



METROPOLIS TV

Production Guidelines for Correspondents

Version: 09-09-2009

Please read this document carefully. This document contains all relevant technical information for acquisition, production and delivery of video material for VPRO Metropolis correspondents.

Summary / checklist:

- This is a documentary project, aimed at telling real stories from all over the world, therefore: staged or re-enacted scenes are not allowed
- Please always include in your story a personal introduction and a personal final remark
- Use the native language of your country / city as default language in your report
- Please pay attention to the audio quality in your reports, make sure that there's not too much background noise or music and audio is not clipped.
- Make sure your audio tracks are on separate tracks, do not mix music with spoken word as we're not able to make any cuts in the report this way. You can send multiple audio tracks as separate files if you want, or use track 1 for music, track 2 for spoken word.
- Our default aspect ratio is 16:9 (shoot in widescreen mode)
- Keep your image free from subtitles or name titles, if you want to use name titles please note it in a separate document. Also do not use editors tricks such as fades and wipes. Keep the image as 'clean' as possible.
- Please include an English written transcript (text + timecodes) with your item
- Mark your files, tapes or dvd's properly. Footage might get lost if it's not marked properly. Always include your location and title of the episode.

Contents:

- Style requirements
 - Shooting and editing
 - Tone of voice
 - Voice-overs

- Production requirements
 - Editing
 - (Sub)titles
 - Audio
 - Special features
 - Extra footage

- Technical information and formats
 - Aspect ratio
 - Resolution
 - Formats & Media
 - Suitable cameras

- Video compression

- Delivery methods
 - Internet (YouSendIt)
 - Mail

- Contact

Style requirements

Here are some style requirements we want you to follow.

Introduction

Each item you produce **MUST BE INTRODUCED** by yourself or your presenter. Make this introduction short and include the following: your (first) name, city and please mention the name Metropolis.

Example: *Hi viewers of Metropolis! Welcome to Johannesburg, this week I will introduce you to the one and only South African Elvis Presley because the King is still hot in South Africa! Let's go!*

Also, end your report with an End Remark/final conclusion

Example: *This was my contribution from Cairo....see you next time! (we encourage you to add a personal thought/conclusion!)*

The style and tone of voice should be more dynamic than an average evening news stand up. Remember that you are speaking to a young audience (20-30 years) who are really interested in the world where you live. Like the rest of the item the introduction also should be done in the **native language** of your country/city.

Voice-overs

Regarding voice-overs: please try to use them as little as possible. Show, don't tell, is our motto!

Tone of voice

Make sure your report has a dynamic style. This means for example: don't interview people inside their offices or behind a desk. It's always better to see the interviewed

person as he walks along the street or is engaged in some kind of activity (of course, always pay attention to the sound). Also, this project is about showing the world from a very personal point of view – you (or the presenter) are our guide to your world for our viewers. Don't be afraid to include your own opinion in your item and make clear that you are the narrator of the story by using personal comments and/or be present in the picture once in a while.

Production requirements

In order for us to use your footage optimally, you need to keep a few things in mind.

Editing

Please don't use editor's tricks such as wipes, fades and such. We want your edit to be as straight-forward as possible. Also: keep your image 'clean' don't use titles etc in your image.

Name titles and subtitling

Please separate all forms of (sub)titles from your footage and include them as a transcript in English with time codes in a separate text file. This way we can overlay uniform (sub)titling on the finished program instead of having a multitude of different title styles. So after you've finished editing please reserve ½ day for this. Make this transcript as accurate as possible as we will use it as the basis for the subtitles.

NOTE: The spoken language in your film is preferably the **native language** where you live.

Audio

Since we'll be incorporating your material in our program, please be aware that we might alter your cut and/or use different music. Please keep additional music and voice-overs on a separate audio track. Export your movie with the regular sound only and export extra audio as a separate audio file. If you deliver on tape: put two

versions of your item on the tape. The first including all audio; the second without music/voiceovers. This way we can leave your final cut intact for the online version and gracefully modify your footage for our own cut.

Also: pay attention to the audio levels of your tracks. Make sure all channels are mixed properly, so everything can be heard.

Extra footage

Please send us your item in a definite version and if possible, especially if you send us a tape, also send extra material that you think might be useable during our final editing (extra quotes, shots, a rough version of the edit with overlength, etc).

Transcript

Include with your item a written transcript in English. Make this as accurate as you can as we use this as the basic document for subtitling of the item. It should look like this:

00.23 Hi my name is Kel O'Neill and I'm from New York, where even fifteen-year olds have careers.

00.32 Hi I'm Maddy

00.34 This is my first dress

00.36 I'm a model .. I love it... And I'm fifteen

Etc.

Mark your footage

Footage can easily get misplaced in our busy office when it's not marked properly. Make sure you write your location and the episode for which you've produced an item on the DVD or tape you send in. If you deliver over the internet, just include your location and the episode name in the filename of your item.

Technical information and formats

In order to preserve consistency between the multitude of video clips from all over the world, we've put a few requirements in place.

Aspect ratio

All footage has to be captured in widescreen 16:9 aspect. Not all cameras are able to capture native widescreen footage but only use part of the camera's sensor (so called *letterboxing*) as illustrated by the picture on the right, thus acquiring an image with less resolution (detail) than a true widescreen camera system. So, if possible, use a camera with a native 16x9 sensor. (For a short list of suitable camera's see the camera section of this document.)



Formats and Media

The lowest format quality that will be accepted is miniDV. Of course, you can acquire on better formats, such as DVCpro, DVCAM, (Digi)beta, XDCAM. We do advise to avoid using cameras that record directly to DVD because of workflow limitations and quality loss.

Suitable cameras

Given the requirements in the previous three sections, we can summarize the camera specifications as follows:

- widescreen 16x9 (preferably native 16x9 sensor)
- miniDV or higher
- PAL preferably, but NTSC and HD resolutions are accepted
- tape or solid state recording mechanism

A few cameras that meet these requirements are:

Canon XL1s *

Canon XL2

Canon XL H1

Panasonic AG-DVX100 *

Panasonic AG-HVX200

Sony PD-150 *

Sony PD-170

Sony HDR-Z1E

Sony HDR-Z7E

(* has a non native widescreen sensor)

Video compression

Once you've finalized your cut, it's time to compress your footage to a format we can use best. NOTE: if you won't deliver your material over the internet this section does not apply to you.

We encourage our correspondents to deliver their footage using Internet. There are many CODEC's (encoding and decoding plug-ins) which you can use to compress your footage. Some of them are extremely good at compressing the material, but at the cost of image quality. Since we need to re-edit your material and broadcast it, we need to have (near) source quality. The truly lossless codecs typically compress in a 3:1 ratio, while the common DV-PAL format (which is a slightly lossy compression scheme in itself) actually has a higher compression rate.

However, this still results in a rather big file size and hence a long upload time. To illustrate: DV PAL requires roughly 28 megabits per second, which means that on a standard ADSL connection (which has an upload speed of about 1 megabit per second), transferring 5 minutes of footage takes about two hours! With the correct tools to help you to safely upload your material this shouldn't pose a problem for those with ADSL access and better. With the YouSendIt internet delivery method we can guarantee a safe upload without broken connections. And let's face it, even FedEx can't get your footages to us in that little time.

For people who have low level Internet access we do accept compressed footage in another format. MPEG-4 at 100% quality reduces file size by a factor 10 compared to DV PAL and retains enough quality after decompression. Although there are some

compression artefacts that can be seen, we do want to have that option available for those with dial-up connections and entry-level ADSL access so that they can upload their footage in roughly the same time as as correspondents on faster connections.

For any questions regarding compressing and sending video material through the internet please contact our technical producer Tim van den Hoff :

T.vanden.Hoff@vpro.nl

Delivery methods

After finishing your project you need to deliver it to us. There are two simple ways to do so. If you have access to an internet connection we encourage you to use our internet delivery method. If there's no way to get any connection, you can mail your footage to us.

Internet (YouSendIt / FTP)

We prefer you to use our FTP upload server. Please contact Tim van den Hoff to get details on how to upload and the password. Tim can be reached at:

T.vanden.Hoff@vpro.nl

Another option is using is using the YouSendIt upload service. With YouSendIt you can send large files (max 2 GB) over the internet. Go to

<http://dropbox.yousendit.com/metropolis> and upload your videos. Maximum file size is 2GB so you probably have to compress your video item before sending it.

Mail

If internet delivery is not an option, you can also use a mail service. Just record your finished project back to tape and send it to the address below. Alternatively, you can burn your data to a disc. Just make sure you burn a data DVD and not a movie DVD, which compresses your footage into a MPEG2 stream, which is bad to work with.

Contact

You can send your DVD's and tapes to:

(please note, we have a DHL and Fedex account, contact the producer for more details)

VPRO

Metropolis

Sumatralaan 49

1217 GP Hilversum

THE NETHERLANDS

For productional (financial, legal) questions, please contact Alex Klippel at

A.Klippel@vpro.nl or at: +31 (0)35 671 27 32.

If you're having technical issues, please contact Tim van den Hoff at

T.vanden.Hoff@vpro.nl or at: +31(0)35 671 21 21.

Other questions should be addressed to your contact person:

Stan van Engelen +31(0)35 671 26 52 S.van.Engelen@vpro.nl

Tjeerd Bijman +31(0)35 671 27 82 T.Bijman@vpro.nl

Eva de Breed +31(0)35 671 24 51 E.de.Breed@vpro.nl

Alaye van Empel +31(0)35 671 26 88 A.van.Empel@vpro.nl

Kawtar Kartoubi +31 (0)35 671 2121 k.kartoubi@vpro.nl