

Publishing the Work

File Formats

Export the Finished Story for Other Uses

Using Digital Storytelling as
a Resource for Change

File Formats

If you have owned or used a computer during the past decade or so, chances are you have had occasion to view movies or video on it that was created by another computer. This may include a CD-ROM or DVD with built-in movies as part of the content, on the Internet, where video is frequently included as part of Websites, as video podcasts (vodcasts), and via e-mail.

Multimedia productions—video, animation and music created by a computer—must undergo a specific type of processing to be played back or viewed on a computer other than the one it was created on without the original software being present. Because file sizes of video pieces are very large, it is not practical to transfer and play them back at their original size on other computers. For this reason, movies must be compressed to a size capable of being moved easily from computer to computer. Once reduced in size (compressed), they can be copied and shared on a CD-ROM or DVD storage medium or via bandwidth on the Internet. Because the computer world is so complex and diverse, there are a number of **file formats** that video may be played back or viewed in. This section will briefly examine a few of the most commonly used digital video playback file formats.

QUICKTIME (.MOV)

QuickTime is an architecture developed by Apple Computer. Multimedia processed using QuickTime add the extension **.mov** as an indicator that the file is a QuickTime file. QuickTime is the standard file format for Macintosh computers both for output (processing) and playback. To view QuickTime movies on a Windows machine, download the appropriate player from Apple.com/quicktime.

Because you have just created a digital story using iMovie, we will complete the production process using QuickTime so you and others may view your movie without iMovie software.

REALPLAYER

Developed by Real Networks, RealPlayer is a software application or plug-in that provides playback for compressed multimedia productions. RealPlayer, compatible with both Windows and Macintosh platforms, will play media files located on your computer as well as on the Internet.

WINDOWS MEDIA PLAYER

Windows Media Player is Microsoft's proprietary software for multimedia playback using PCs.

PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTING YOUR STORY

iMovie's Share function provides very useful pre-set output choices for your digital story. Output specifications should be considered for whatever your intended distribution use or sharing purpose may be. There are many places to distribute your stories: YouTube, Facebook, and My Space to name a few. When you upload digital media to a server, you should try to keep the file size small for quick download.

Output specifications you should consider are:

Frame Rate

Full-frame video runs at a rate of 30 frames per second. Anything less than this will have some visible "loss."

Screen Size

Full-frame (full-size) digital video is sized at 720 pixels (horizontal) by 520 pixels (vertical). Half-size video is sized at 320 x 240 pixels, quarter size at 160 x 120 pixels.

Sound

Sound can be in full two-channel stereo or mono.

File Size

One of the most important considerations is file size. The file size correlates with the frame rate and screen size—the lower the frame rate and smaller the screen size, the smaller the file size will be. Moving large-size files across the Internet is only possible for people with very large and fast connections, so a smaller file is preferable for uses such as e-mail and Websites. Other storage media like CD-ROMs or DVDs can handle larger file sizes. CDs can hold approximately 700 MB of data and DVDs can hold approximately 4.3 GB of data.

iMovie offers pre-set compression settings for the following uses:

E-mail

Use this option to process your movie small enough to e-mail to friends, family or business contacts. E-mailed movies are compressed at 10 frames per second, screen sized at 160 x 120 (pixels) and have mono sound.

HomePage

This option renders your movie for use on the Web. Your movie will be compressed to 12 frames per second, screen size of 240 x 180 (pixels) with mid-quality stereo sound. File size will be estimated.

Videocamera

This is a very useful and highly recommended option for archiving your story. We suggest archiving your completed movie to good-quality videotape. Be sure to label your tape and, following the transfer, flip the safety switch on the side of the tape to avoid recording anything else over your story.

iDVD

A discussion of iDVD requires an entire manual on its own, thus is beyond the scope of this workshop. Among other wondrous capabilities, iMovie integrates seamlessly with iDVD to add chapter markers within your movie.

Quicktime

QuickTime compresses video for various uses. We've already mentioned the settings for Email and HomePage. In addition, QT will process video for streaming Web (to play live from the Internet) at 12 frames per second, 240 x 180 pixels and mid-quality stereo sound. File size will be estimated.

QT compresses video for playback on CD-ROM at 15 frames per second, screen size of 320 x 240 pixels and full-quality stereo sound. Choosing to process your movie in Full Quality DV creates a single DV movie file with no loss of quality. Your movie will play full-size: 720 x 540 pixels, 30 frames per second with no loss of compression. These files will be larger in size than compressed files.

iPod

The iPod export setting formats your story for the iPod. It is sent directly to iTunes, placed in your iTunes library, and then you're able to copy it to your iPod.

EXPERT SETTINGS

Expert settings allow you to choose your own compression rates. The exported size will depend on which options you select. If you wish to experiment with Expert Settings, we recommend independently researching the various codec (compression/decompression) options available.

ARCHIVING SUGGESTIONS

If you are not using your own computer to create your digital story, you probably would like to save all of your digital materials to work on again at another time, or even reuse some of the materials you created for this story in a different story.

We highly recommend archiving all your digital media, including working assets, iMovie project file and your completed movie. Because digital video uses tremendous amounts of hard-drive space (remember, five minutes of digital video takes up 1 GB of hard-drive space), all of your material combined is likely to take up a large amount of space. One suggestion for archiving your material is to invest in a FireWire hard drive. FireWire drives, for large amounts of storage space, are easy to connect to the computer and are becoming increasingly more affordable.

Another option is to archive your material to other forms of storage media, including DVD and CD-ROM. DVDs can hold approximately 4.3 GB of data and CDs hold approximately 700 MB of data. Try to assess the amount of material you will need to archive before deciding which storage device may work best for you.

We suggest archiving:

Digital Media Assets

Original photograph and artwork scans, images that have been enhanced using Photoshop, voiceover narration files, iMovie project files and completed .mov files.

If you have original video footage recorded on a recent format of tape, you can save space on a hard drive or other storage device by not archiving video clips digitized for use in your project. Digitizing video is a very easy procedure using iMovie, and we suggest digitizing video on an as-needed basis. content—archive it to another format immediately.

Using Digital Storytelling as a Resource for Change

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Sharing your digital story with friends and family is an essential part of the digital storytelling process. Digital stories can offer insight and knowledge that others may otherwise not know. Digital stories can preserve part of your essence so future generations may one day learn something about you—something you cared about and thought was important.

Communicating a message through story is a powerful resource; distributing stories to larger audiences can educate, encourage thought and initiate change. Digital stories offer people a chance to respond to world events or personal experiences, to process the event, interpret its significance to themselves and offer insight about how change is necessary.

Consider a cause you care about or a life-altering experience. Then realize how stories told about this subject may compel others to become involved, make a difference, effect a change.

Storytelling can be used as a resource for change, community and peace-building efforts, personal reflection and affirmation. Stories can be used as an archive or reference for historical events.

Integrate digital storytelling into your organizations' outreach efforts, self-publish and distribute stories via Websites or author your own CD or DVD. Submit your story to film and video festivals for exposure. Include your story in relevant presentations or speeches and screen it at meetings and gatherings. New media and independent publishing have enabled innovative and effective avenues through which to get your message heard!

Storyboarding Template

