

DISC WIZ

WRITING, PRODUCING AND DIRECTING YOUR DVD

Today, we are bestowed with an array of tools for producing visual and audio presentations that far surpass those of professional filmmakers and TV directors, just a decade ago. But, how do you use these tools to plan, write, produce and direct a DVD that will compel viewers to action, through a creative blend of entertainment and informational materials?

* START WITH THE STORY

Writing is challenging for most of us, but "the play's the thing"¹ when it comes to DVD production. Fortunately, we now have video to tell much of our story ("a picture's worth 1,000 words"² and audio to emotionally involve our viewer/listener. Both tools are super friendly to our little silver friend with the hole in the middle: the DVD disc.

In addition, we have an array of various DVD-ROM assets to choose from: still photos, historical video footage, Power Point[®] presentations and print resources (includes artwork, news clippings, written text, trademarks, etc.). Interactivity and DVD (or, CD) go hand in glove!

Knowing your resources at the start helps you imagine, visualize and hear your story. And that is how you "rough out" your script.

We use the word "imagine" because DVD welcomes your imagination to pour forth with ideas, and see them materialize as if by magic!

* BEGIN VISUALIZING YOUR DVD

Now begins the fun part. You know a lot about your future DVD. Others around you may know more about certain resources, so you'll tap into those resources soon.

But first, imagine your own disc. Visualize the finished package on the store shelf. Pretend you buy it, put it into your DVD player or laptop and start enjoying the show! Jot down short bullet points. Try to think in both visual and in audio terms. *Ask yourself:* Will this topic be covered by talking (interview or voice-over narration) or through visuals (videotaped footage, archival or new still photography, artwork, models, on-screen print, etc.). Dream on and take notes of your dreams, before you awake!

Outline the sections of your disc first, making visual notes. Some producers prefer to devise a page with two vertical columns. On the top of the left column, they label it "VIDEO." On the right side column, the top label is "AUDIO." Now they can summarize the visuals they imagine and write it in the LEFT COLUMN; while writing the imagined audio in the RIGHT COLUMN.

If working on a computer, you can cut and paste the order later. If using a lined tablet or "typewriter"³ you can (literally) cut and paste later. Whatever, it works. Don't worry about the order of your story; just the ideas.

Put all of your ideas into your "first draft" video/audio script outline. Some will never see the light of day; some will emerge as jewels on your final DVD. But, good or bad, all ideas go into the rough draft script notes, since you may not remember them later, when you might need to go back to your inspirational resources.

* ROUND UP THOSE RESOURCES

Pretend you're a cable news show producer. To compete in ratings (and, attract advertisers), today's "segment" must include:

- A. Interesting topics
- B. Fascinating people with entertaining personalities
- C. Information that is NEWS to your viewer
- D. Visuals and/or props that are "eye poppers" to support your story

Suppose you're creating a DVD of your band's tour. Being pro entertainers, each member is probably of great interest to your viewers/listeners. Plan to include lots of "talking heads" that capture on camera the spoken words of each personality. If he/she won't speak, then grab the visuals by haunting that member with your camera.

Most of us don't know what to say when someone sticks a video camera in our face. So, make a list before "rolling the cameras."⁴

* A BOX OF PARTS DOES NOT A FERRARI MAKE ⁵

Before we rent our tux/gown (or, choose the upholstery) let's take a bird's eye peek at the whole process of producing your DVD:

These are the steps:

1. Rough Draft of Script
2. Listing your DVD Assets
3. Laying out a Template for Authoring your DVD
4. Shooting video footage
5. Editing video footage
6. Editing Audio for your DVD
7. Reviewing the Rough Cut of your Video-Audio segments
8. Revising the Editing of segments
9. Final Script
10. Designing DVD Menus
11. Authoring the DVD
12. Designing the Label
13. Designing the Package
14. Designing any Inserts to go inside the finished Package
15. Manufacturing the DVD

I know what you're thinking. Why didn't he mention all this work before I got excited about producing a DVD for my band, business, school, church, public service organization?

And what about the cost? We don't have the budget of a major studio! Why send out an invitation when I can't afford the admission? Or maybe even the parking.

★ THE GOOD NEWS

Yes, there are more steps you must follow to reach that Goal of a new, original, creative, compelling, effective, DVD for your needs. But, the Good News is that what you will do in creating it is (frequently) the most expensive part; and, you can control that expense.

Don't own a video camera? Borrow or rent. Can't afford expensive computer editing programs? Time and money don't allow for becoming an editor or authoring expert?

At Disc Wiz® we are ready and able to supply everything you need to assemble the box of parts; to morph, massage and materialize your dream into reality. Our team understands keeping costs down to minimum. We have many years of experience in writing, producing, directing, editing, post-producing, designing, authoring and replication/duplication of DVD and CD projects (as well as TV and film). Once we discuss your project together, we can provide ongoing guidelines to help you tackle the list above.

★ FOR STARTERS:

1. Rough Draft of Script
You know what to do already. Imagine. Write it down. Discuss with others. Add their ideas. Write your Rough Draft Script.
2. Listing your DVD Assets
An "Asset" in DVD production talk, is simply any item or thing that can be used as a part of the finished DVD.
The interviews you shoot are "assets"
Still photos you can include somewhere are "assets"
Music you have the right to use is an "asset"
"B" Roll footage you shoot is an "asset"
Historic video/home movies/still photos are an "asset"
Artwork, models, designs, anything visual; once you shoot video or digital still pictures of it, is an "asset"
Anything tangible that pertains to your DVD story and developing script is an "asset"
List them. Gather them. We'll use them. Together.
3. Laying out an Outline for Authoring your DVD
By now, we've all become handy at "navigating" our way through a DVD from its "menus." We all understand our options, shown on screen in each Menu.
Laying out an Outline consists of the planning how and where the navigation "buttons" on your DVD Menu will take your viewers.⁶
This is the "roadmap" for your DVD navigation. Planning it is fun, but the real journey is about to begin.
4. Shooting video footage
Spielberg, move over. This canvas chair isn't big enough for both of us.
I always wanted to be a director. This is mytime! Borrow equipment; borrow people; borrow people with their own cameras; make a production of it, 'cause that's what it IS. Get the word out that you're producing a DVD and watch them volunteer. What does it pay? Something producers call "Screen Credits!"
5. Editing video footage
Our editor will work with you as the producer/director, to fulfill your passionate vision. Ryan Taylor will put your box full of video Assets into Final Cut Pro® to edit the video segments. Once a "rough assembly" is done by Ryan, you and he will view it by e-mail and discuss it by phone and internet. Share ideas. He is great at explaining your options and making recommendations to help you reach your vision - and Beyond.⁷
6. Editing Audio for your DVD
Same process as for the "Video" assets; except that Ryan will enlist the help of Kevin Lucero design the sound for your DVD. Lots of audio possibilities abound in the World of DVD: Stereo, Surround Sound, HD Audio, and others.
If the Band rocks, maybe it should cut loose in Dolby® Digital 5.1?

7. Reviewing the Rough Cut of your Video-Audio segments
 As the box full of Assets each find a home on the about-to-be DVD, Ryan will show you samples of how it will all play once it settles into position and form for the soon-to-occur process of Authoring. You, as Producer/Director, now see your Vision materialize. You are about to deliver a newborn DVD into this waiting World!
 Now is a good time to share this Rough Cutof the video segments with other insiders who are eagerly awaiting the finished product. Revisions are still possible and much more economical to make now, before the Authoring of your final DVD begins.
8. Revising the Editing of segments
 At Disc Wiz[®] we include three (3) revisions in your low cost quote for Editing video and audio for your DVD. Extra re-editing costs more, and our experience verifies that most segments begin to "stale" after too many re-edits. Compelling, involving video has an "edge" to it that serves to pull in the viewers. Don't fall into the trap of making your original, inspired video too "polished." Plan to stay fresh and original!
9. Final Script
 If certain segments need Narration, now is the time to write and record it. Combined with the "live" narrative you recorded with your video segments, you now have your completed Final Draft Script.
10. Designing DVD Menus
 Using your still photo Assets, or "grabs" from your Video Assets; plus artwork, titling and Audio "grabs" from your video and music Assets, Ryan will work with you on designing your DVD Menus. Each one will contain "buttons" that take the viewer wherever he/she wishes to navigate. Just like the grand Proscenium Arch of Greek Theatre, your exciting Menus are the door to the Wonder about to unfold. Choose a button, click it, and enter the enchanting and magical world of your new DVD!
11. Authoring the DVD
 Here's where it all comes together: menus, video segments, music, DVD-ROM elements, even Links to your website! Revising the "Outline" (Item #3) to accommodate everything that made the "Final Cut" and is to be included on your new DVD. Your DVD is about to be born!
12. Designing the Label
 Name your baby. The moment has arrived to Title your production and design the full color label art.
13. Designing the Package
 What motivates your intended customer to want to own and view your DVD? We'll help you decide on a packaging concept, then execute the design of all the final files for printing.
14. Designing any Inserts to go inside the finished Package
 2-panel, four-panel, six-panel insert? If it folds and fits inside the CD or DVD case, we'll design it and print it for you. Three revisions are included in everylow cost design quote we provide. And nobody beats our top quality, full color printing prices!
15. Manufacturing the DVD
 There is never any minimum or any maximum number you will need to order. Unlike the others, we do notrequire our producers to buy thousands of units to get competitive manufacturing prices. And, you can always re-order as your needs dictate.

We help you create your Budget and Stay On Budget. Call or e-mail us to discuss your project and we'll provide a comprehensive Quote!

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Nobody is better than the Disc Wiz[®] team at joyfully and productively collaboratingwith you to keep yourcreative process flowing and your new DVD On Budget and On Time. We never quote you a price, then place your project on a conveyer belt for "assembly." At Disc Wiz[®] we're on a first-name basis in an ongoing working relationship with you, as the producer. When you call or e-mail us, you are always communicating with a person- not a department.

† Receive updates regularly by visiting www.discwiz.com and sign up for the newsletter.



¹ William Shakespeare
² Cecil B. DeMille
³ Ancient cave device with keyboard and a built-in printer
⁴ Next time your price goes way up
⁵ Me
⁶ you're about to have some
⁷ Lost in Space - B&W TV Show - 1950s

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