

Storytelling

The purpose here is HOW a story is told, not necessarily that of a complicated subject. (A story of a leaf falling to the ground.)

Tell the story from a specific point(s) of view

- 1st, 2nd or 3rd person
- from the imaginative viewpoint of an inanimate object, an animal, a machine, etc.

Experiment with the sequence/order of various clips. Be aware of the effect of the specific ordering of information as it is presented to the audience.

- past, present, future tense
- flash back or foreword

Use both Audio and Video to tell your story. Experiment with one leading into the other. (For example start music clip which sets up the mood of a scene before you actually see the images.) Synchronize specific actions with dramatic points within a sound clip such as spikes in volume or changes in instruments/voices. Be aware of the power of silence and when to use it most effectively. The Pause...

tempo or rhythm

- slo-mo, fast-mo
- cuts or transitions between scenes and sounds, effects the subliminal feelings/moods of the audience and creates an overall context within which the story line is then interpreted.

Use your imagination and value judgments concerning what and how much to tell to keep the audience engaged. Surprise endings or twists in the story line are often what makes a story memorable. This doesn't have to be complicated, however.

Advance the narrative

Advancing the narrative refers to the ability to tell a story in a sequential, engaging, interesting and thought-provoking manner. With video we have the capability to do so using a variety of methods. These include:

- voice over/audio
- music/audio
- motion graphics/animation
- still image photography
- live motion video

Within each of these separate areas there are countless ways to creatively manipulate them individually and interweave them collectively, all for the ultimate goal of advancing the narrative of the story.

The narrative is always advanced through video/film by the collaborative or cumulative effect of several of these areas together, but only one at a time becomes the primary motivator. In other words, at any given moment within a video, either the voice-over, music, animation, still, or live action takes the lead in telling the story while the other areas assume supportive or complimentary roles.

This is similar to the way in which we organize visual elements on a poster, for example. We first determine the main message and then determine a visual hierarchy between the photos, display type, text type, etc. If all those elements were equal in visual weight they would be competing with each other visually and result in giving a confusing message.

With video we also determine a hierarchy of elements for the purpose of advancing the narrative. One of the fun things about video is that this hierarchy may change over time throughout the course of the video. The story might be introduced by music/audio, for example, with a very tight close-up of a still image which acts in a secondary role at this beginning point. As the video rolls, the image might zoom out to see the complete picture and as a result, the photo now assumes the lead in advancing the overall narrative and the music becomes more secondary. We can accent this shift in hierarchy by doing things like changing the volume (or pan) on the audio or going from b & w to color (in addition to the zoom out) on the image.

Another aspect of this capability to shift the lead role between different aspects of video/film is the possibility of telling a story-within-a-story, or picture-within-a-picture. Utilizing the pan and zoom effects on a still photographic image can exploit this particular aspect in countless and very creative ways.

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ARTS 095 COMPUTER GRAPHIC DESIGN II: TIME-BASED MEDIA

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Ken Burns documentaries on Jazz, Baseball and The Civil War are prime examples of advancing the narrative through shifts in video hierarchy and story-within-a-story techniques. Look for specific ways in which the story is told and how images are sequenced and presented. How are supplemental images and sound effects used to augment a main theme. Look for examples of visual hierarchy, what elements are being “juggled” within the overall context of the video-story. Are they all given equal importance? Does there importance in relation to one another change