

Advice for photographers transitioning to multimedia from others who have done it before you ...

Brent Foster, multimedia producer with Bombay Flying Club; former LA Times photographer

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"I think the biggest thing to remember is don't get caught up in the medium.

I really struggled when moving into multimedia about my identity as a photojournalist, and took it almost as a personal offense when people called me a videographer, video journalist, really anything other than a photojournalist. Don't get caught up in that.

Remember the key is you're a storyteller. Whether you're making still images, or images that move, you're composing them the same way, and combining audio, video stills... multiple tools to build a strong narrative, and help someone tell their own story. To me, the power of multimedia, is it allows the subject to have their own voice, something each medium on their own doesn't necessarily do. So, remember that. Don't get caught up in what tool your using, or have an identity crisis. Just concentrate on strong visuals, good narrative, and use the best tool(s) for the job."

Josh Meltzer, photography professor at Western Kentucky; former photographer with Roanoke.com

<http://www.joshmeltzer.com/>

"I think one really important thing for photographers to realize is that it is in their benefit to gladly embrace multimedia storytelling. The idea that it's "more work being forced upon me" just doesn't hold up. Yes, it's more work, but yes, it makes your stories better, gives your stories more of a voice, trains you in new areas and counteracts what is happening in the printed medium, which is largely less space every year.

Two facts are really important to remember.....1. The web is more and more visual every year and 2. Everyone likes a good story. If we can provide great visuals for a expanding medium WITH a great story we can't go wrong. We can't go wrong in attracting readers/viewers and we can't go wrong finding people to pay us for our amazing content.

I would also say that as photographers we shouldn't necessarily feel like video is causing us to abandon still photography. It's power is not going away, nor should it. We have to be more careful about how we choose the medium for the story. This means that we don't rule out any medium when thinking about this idea. We also need to be open to the fact that there are mediums that are very attractive for some pieces of information and story and others for other mediums. Graphics, maps, interactivity in addition to words, video and photo should all be considered.

You can't do it all, so COLLABORATE. Find people who are talented in different fields, but who have similar storytelling interests and see what you can do together. Specialize in what you're good at, but be at least aware of what other mediums offer and stay current on the latest potential that the web offers for storytelling. You don't have to be the master of all of it, but you should master parts of it and be familiar with a lot of it.

Finally I would say, take a course, sign up for workshops, educate yourself, even if you have to pay for it. The days of company-sponsored training are largely over, so fork out the money and buy yourself a nice educational gift. Even a long weekend workshop can go miles in inspiration or technical know-how."

Poul Madsen, co-founder of Bombay Flying Club, a Danish multimedia production studio

<http://www.bombayfc.com/>

"I had worked with film documentary before so for me it was only natural to think in sequences. If you're working as a still photographer and if you're used to do a final edit of 10-12 images then it can be quite challenging to venture into multimedia, because you suddenly have to produce and deliver say, 80 or maybe a 100 good images in good quality. The key is to understand that you have to do a series of extremely good

pictures (your usual 10-12 “award winning” images) and then use these as keypoints in your story. The rest of the images that you shoot are “tweeners” - those are images that take the viewer from one keypoint in the story to the next.

Once you want to do a multimedia narrative you have to think up a quick storyboard. If you have time then you can visualize it and maybe do a rough drawing.

You need to focus on a starting point - a point of no return - and an ending of your story. Suspense! You don't want to bore the viewer so make sure you have a powerful beginning in your story.

Looking back, I wouldn't have done things much differently I think. I spent a lot of time practicing flash skills and taking online tutorials. Things have changed now with new tools allowing everyone to do full screen multimedia stories.

In order to stand out one needs to spend a lot of time on the storyline. If you can present a story in a compelling and surprising way then you will have an audience.

The hardest thing has to be the fact that you suddenly need to master a variety of very complex software like Photoshop, Final Cut, After Effects and Flash. This is extremely time consuming and you have to accept the fact that you will never become a pro user. If there's a budget then the only option is to work with a team of people who have core skills. Then you can do multimedia that is unique and that will stand out.”

David White, photography director of Duckrabbit, a British multimedia production studio

<http://duckrabbit.info/>

“I think my message would be to face the fear. Everyone has their groove, their comfort zone. Step outside of that and get on with it, it'll work out...really the only difference is a bit of kit, software and imagination. I would also say that we haven't made the transition, we are in the transition, all of us, so there are no rules, and that's got to be fun :)”

Zach Wise, multimedia producer at The New York Times

<http://digitalartwork.net/>

“I would say my best piece of advice would be (or current pet peeve) , DON'T USE TITLE CARDS or text in a video piece. It's lazy and ineffective. Get the story in audio and try and visualize it for the audience.”

Chad A. Steves, UNC photography professor and former multimedia producer at MediaStorm

(paraphrased from a phone conversation) <http://www.milesfrommaybe.com/>

What makes us [photographers] unique is the way we see, and we'll hold on to that when we move into audio and video. Audio moments are the same as visual moments. You still compose and frame moving shots as you would still images but you just need to capture subjects moving into and out of the frame.

The audio drives the multimedia. If the audio sucks, the piece will suck. Without good audio, you are left with nothing. The problem with the Mark II is the audio issues. The Mark II is great for visuals and Broll.

If you are going to do interviews, you might as well do video interviews. Definitely make sure you have a good wireless kit for audio and a tripod.

When determining if you should start by producing audio slide shows or videos, you need to ask yourself, “What are you excited about?” That's what you should do.

Benjamin Chesterton, co-founder of Duckrabbit <http://duckrabbit.info/>

“My advice would be keep going; just because nothing is working out as you planned doesn't mean with hard work you won't have a great piece at the end. Determination is key. Its always a battle producing this stuff.”