

EDITING VIDEO



Eye of the Beholder by Clearly Ambiguous

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Fundamentals of editing web video

By Misha Antonich

Editing video, whether for the web, TV or DVD distribution runs a wide gamut of sophistication. Depending on the context, such as in legal video (testimonies, etc.) simply trimming clips is appropriate. For a creative project with a sizable budget editing is an extensive task that involves many people and skill sets.

Beyond the mechanics and buttons of a digital editing tool work, they often hit a plateau. They recognize a difference between their work and that of professional editors, say of a

hollywood movie or an intense indie documentary.

Essentially the difference is familiarity with visual storytelling techniques in editing. Storytelling in itself is the core and purpose of most visual media - regardless of referring to a "movie", a personal or a technical video. Walter Murch, editor of *Apocalypse Now* and Edward Dmytryk *Crossfire* many other respected films, sums up 6 rules that should 'motivate' cuts or editorial choices.

1. [Walter Murch's 6 Rules](#)
2. [Edward Dmytryk's 7 Rules](#)

For the purpose of our work here, regardless of the system/software you are working on, try out these tips.

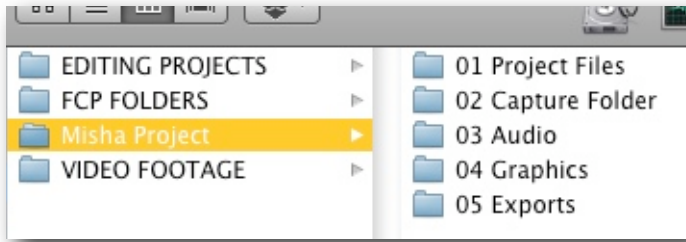
Editing Workflow

Capture/Transfer/Watch
Bring in all the footage you shot to your edit software and try to watch most or all before editing.

Name Use descriptive names: "WS Car pan L". This tells you a lot just by looking the name.

Quality In Editing, generally use full quality, video, audio or still. Upon export, you compress.

✔ **Organize** Keep your project and your media files in 1 place - in clearly labeled folders (ideally on a non-system 'media' or external hard drive.



Visual storytelling

✔ **Emotion** Generally go for emotive shots or images that invoke that. A straight-up tutorial is better with someone who shares a smile. [Use music](#) to engage your viewers as music generally emotionalizes us.

✔ **Shot Diversity** Here's where to use your different shot framings. Classic: Establish w/ a LS -> MS -> CU (this is moving in) Feel free to experiment, but use different framing to keep interest.

✔ **Purpose** This about what you want people to see (and what to cut out). Gratuitous zooms/ pans jump out as to shots without a point.

✔ **Action** When possible cut on mid-action. If you cut from a CU of someone dance, for example to a MS of the same scene you "hide" the cut and people stayed engaged in the story. [Here's](#) an accessible example that shows other technique too.

Aesthetics

✔ **Title** effectively. Use serifs and check for readability. If you are using a title over video, consider a background, outline or dropshadow to make text stand out better.

✔ **Balance** Recall any radio show where announcers and music alternate. 99.9% these elements are not competing but rather come on one-after-another or with such different levels that you can easily hear everything. That is what video should sound like too!

✔ **Transitions** 90% of the time - simply cut from one clip to the next. Transitions like dissolves are useful for shows change (time, location, mood, etc.) and fades suggest the ending of something. The rest? The can be cheesy, ironic, or a gimmick to keep our interest.

✔ **Graphics/Stills** consider the size of your video frame:

SD is 720x480 pixels

HD(720) 1280x720

HD(720) 1920x1080

You should try for graphics that have at least a size around the resolution you are working with. If you need to "zoom in", to scale up the graphic in the editor, you should have a bigger image. Smaller sizes work, but if the editor scales more than 20% it's quickly obvious.

