

CREATING VIDEO TUTORIALS FOR USER ASSISTANCE

By Tom Johnson
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Why Create Video?

- Combines visual with conceptual
- Users watch them
- Video medium forces simplicity
- YouTube is second largest search engine
- Product managers love them

Two Types of Learners

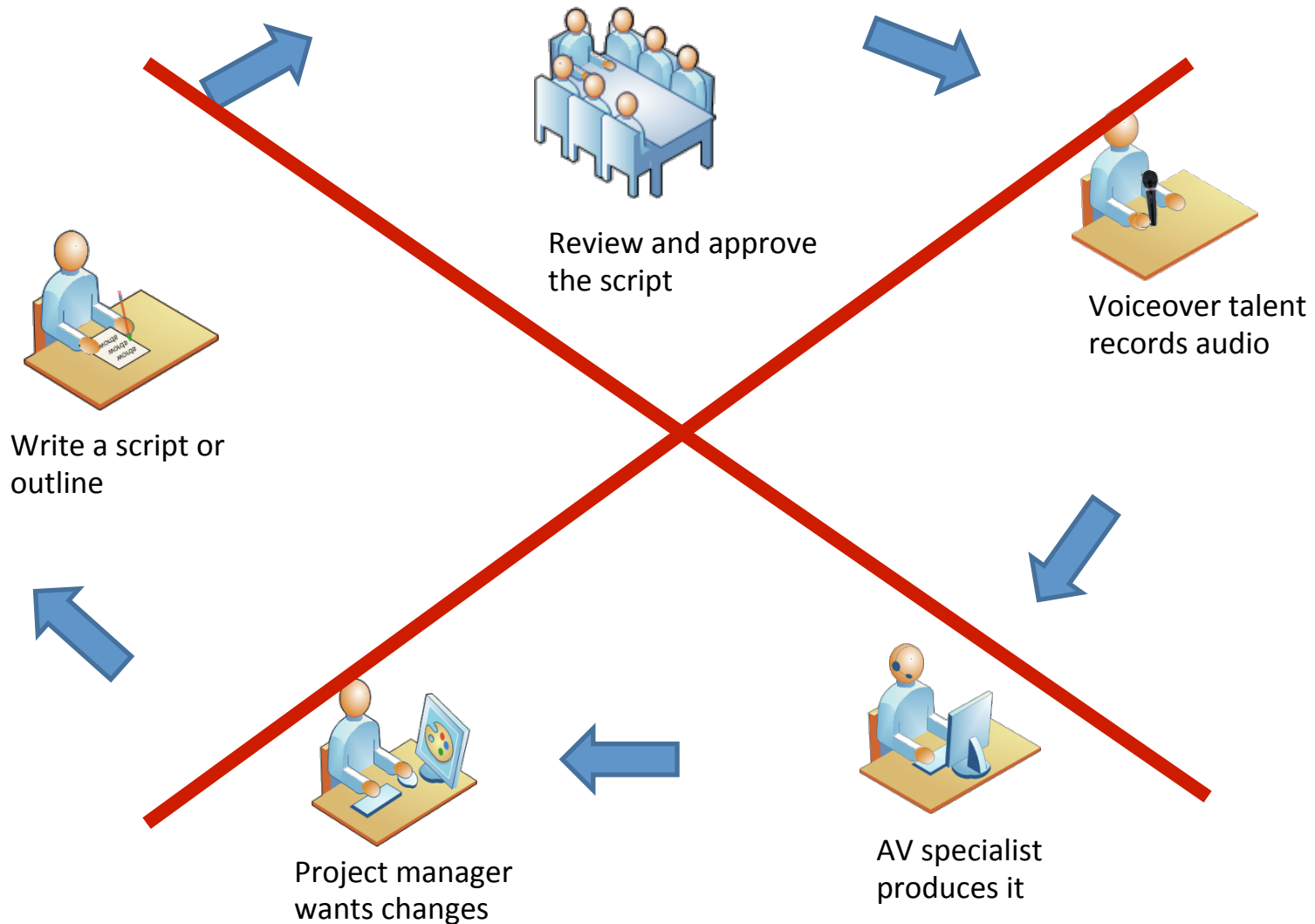


Advanced user, just looking for answer to a specific question.

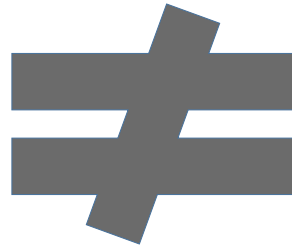


New user, looking to learn how the application works.

The Traditional Model



The Problem



My Process

1. Write a friendly script.
2. Set up a recording environment.
3. Record and narrate the video.
4. Dub over the original recording.
5. Publish and embed the video.



Outline
or
Script?



STEP 1. WRITE A FRIENDLY SCRIPT



Lynda.com and Scripts

“I do record my screen and narrate simultaneously, as do all of the authors at lynda.com. I personally rehearse each movie before recording, but even then, it's not always a perfectly smooth recording. All recordings, once completed, move onto our editors and testers before any customer ever sees them. So, while I try my best to get each movie captured in a single take, there's more happening behind the scenes long after I've completed my part.”

— David Rivers, trainer on lynda.com



Scripted Versus Unscripted



Unscripted narration
(David Rivers)

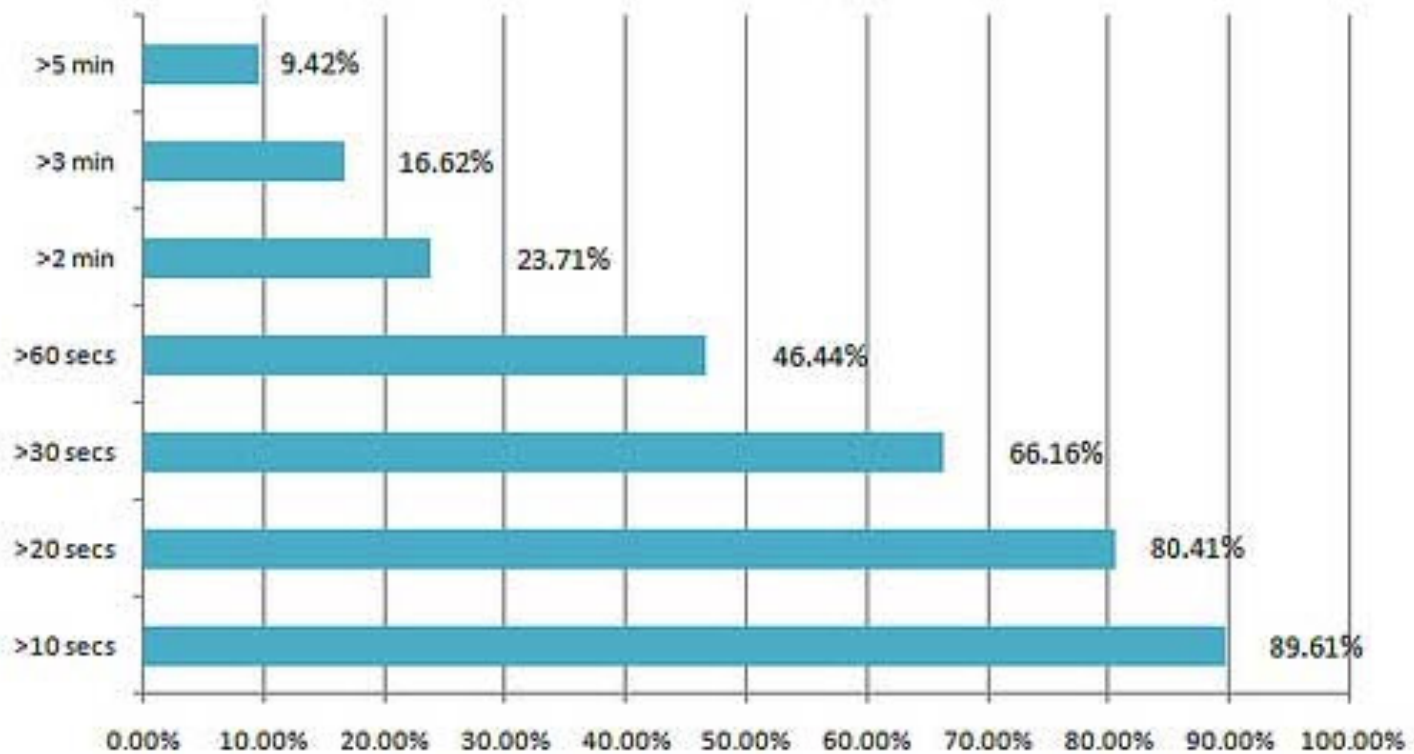


Scripted narration
(Peter Drew)



“ideal run-time for web video 2.5 – 4 minutes” — Video2zero

Audience Attention Span



Percentage of video completed



Attention Spans

“Most [users] don’t have the tools or narrative capabilities to hold the attention of an audience for any real span of time.”
— Brooks Andrus





cloth walls • no fan • unschedulable • isolated • lockable • windowless

STEP 2. SET UP A RECORDING ENVIRONMENT



Acoustic Room



Boxy room



Quiet room



USB Microphone



Yeti Blue



XLR Microphone



Electro-Voice RE-20



Mixer/Preamplifier



Comparing Microphone Sounds



Cheap headset



Cheap lapel mic



Radio Shack
handheld



Shure SM58



Zoom H4



Electro-Voice
RE20



Avoid Plosives and Breathing Noises



pop filter



Acoustic Dampening

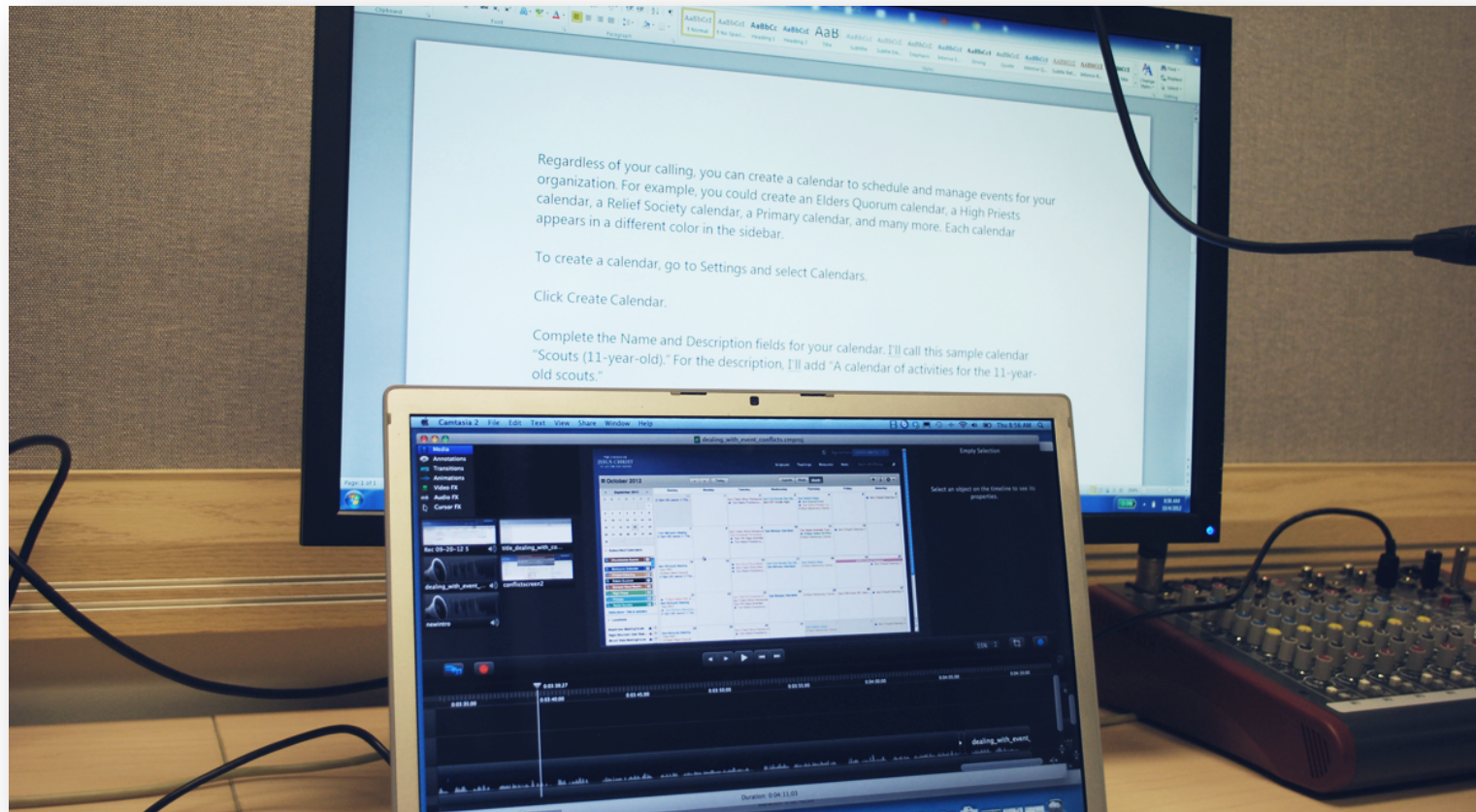


Harlan Hogan portable
foam booth



Reflexion filter





STEP 3. RECORD & NARRATE THE VIDEO

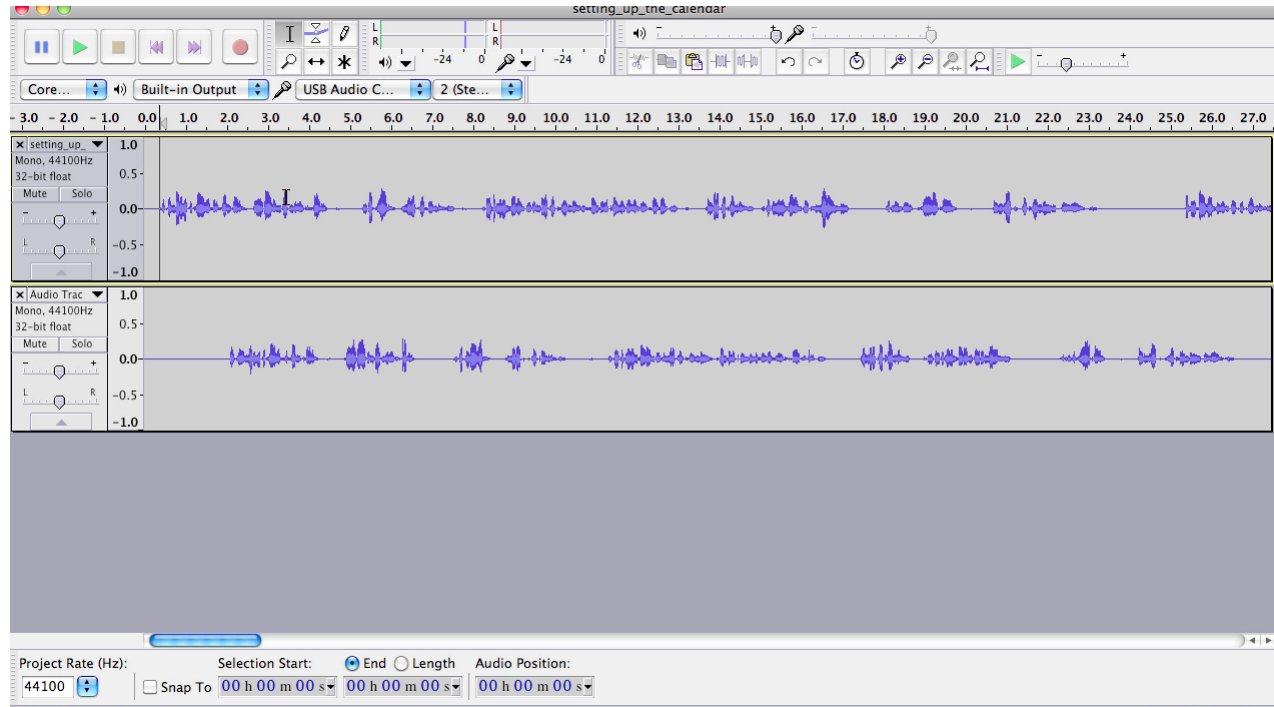


Screen Setup Tips

- Screen dimensions: 1280 x 720 dimensions required for HD rendering
- Try to avoid zooms and pans
- Close out all pop-ups
- Don't wiggle your mouse

Recording Tools

- Recommended: Camtasia for Mac
- Other: Camtasia for PC, Mimic, Captivate, Snapz Pro,
- Video production tools: Adobe After Effects, Adobe Premier, Apple Final Cut Pro



STEP 4. DUB OVER THE ORIGINAL AUDIO RECORDING



The Trick to Getting Good Audio

1. Record demo and script simultaneously.
2. Separate out audio track and import it into Audacity.
3. Re-record the audio.
4. Line up the old recording with new audio.
5. Import back into video timeline.



Many Ways to Read a Sentence

She stole the money.

The door is open.

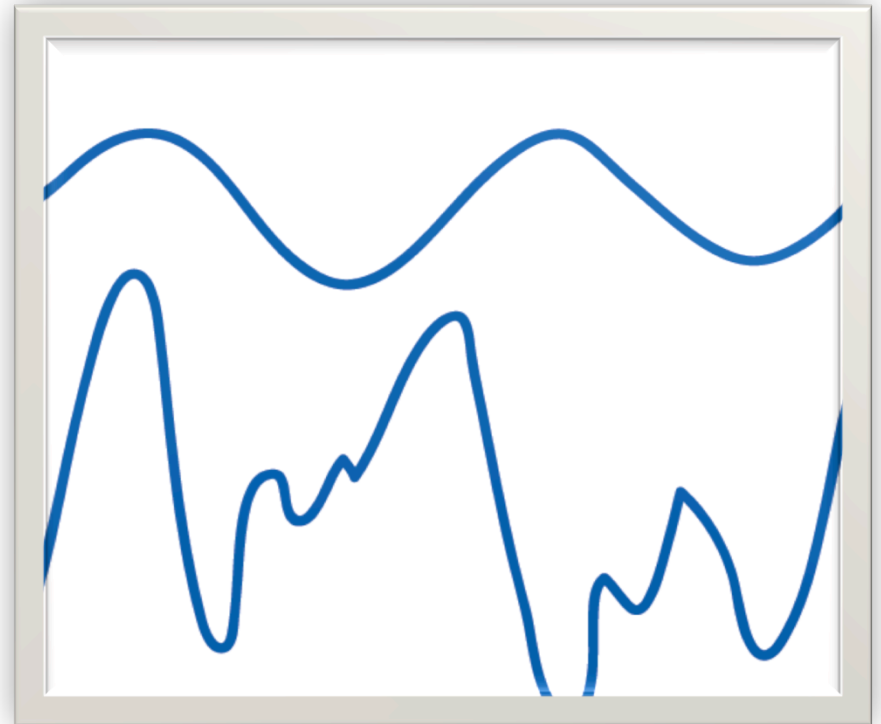


Voiceover Tip: Read Ahead

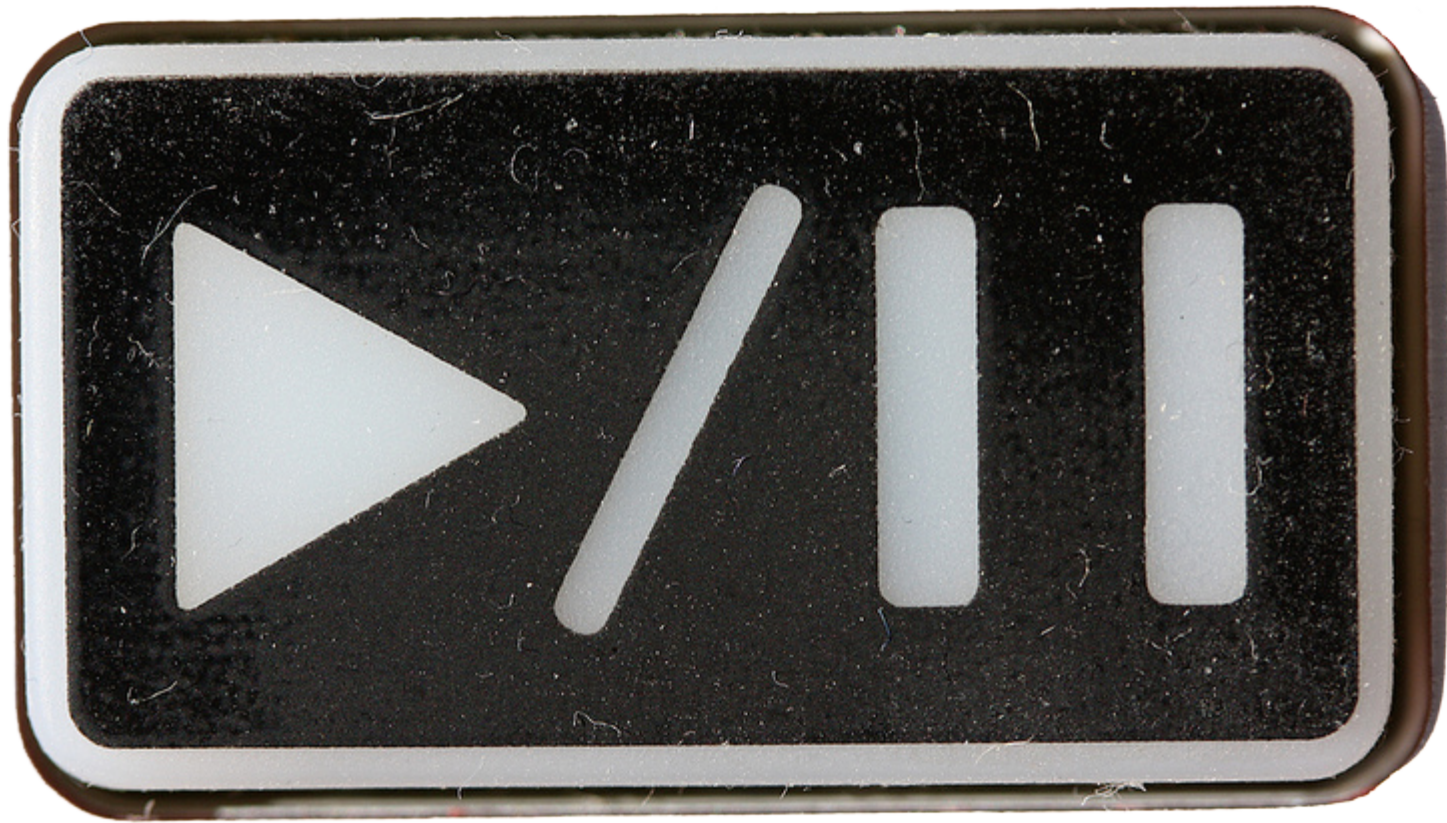


Voiceover Tip: Vary Your Pitch

Pitch variation: Vary the pitch of your voice from high to low to mid-tones as you read.



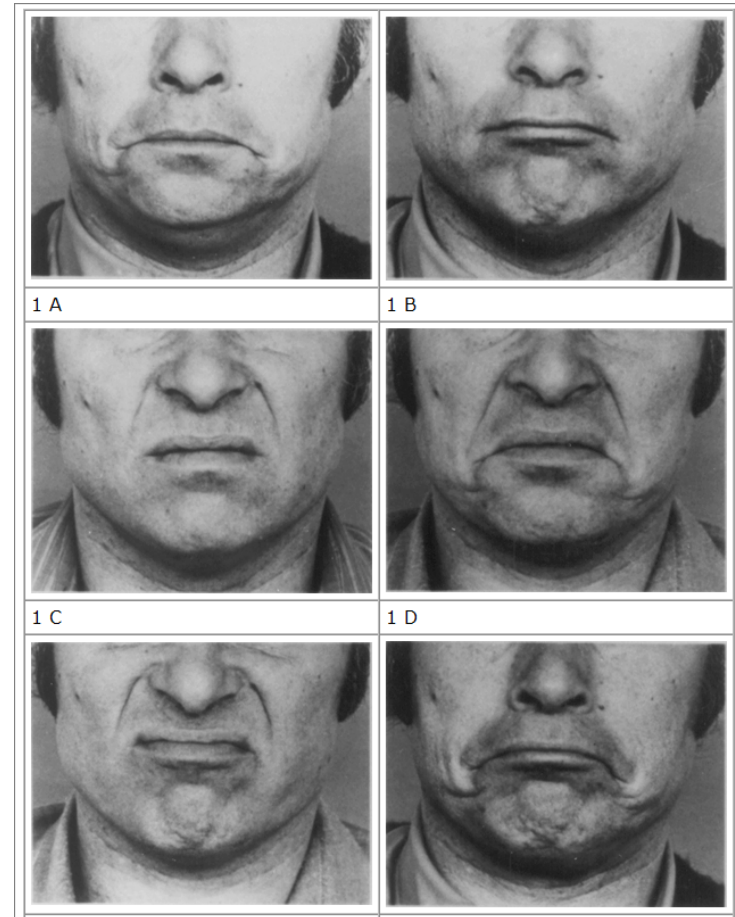
Voiceover Tip: Learn to Pause



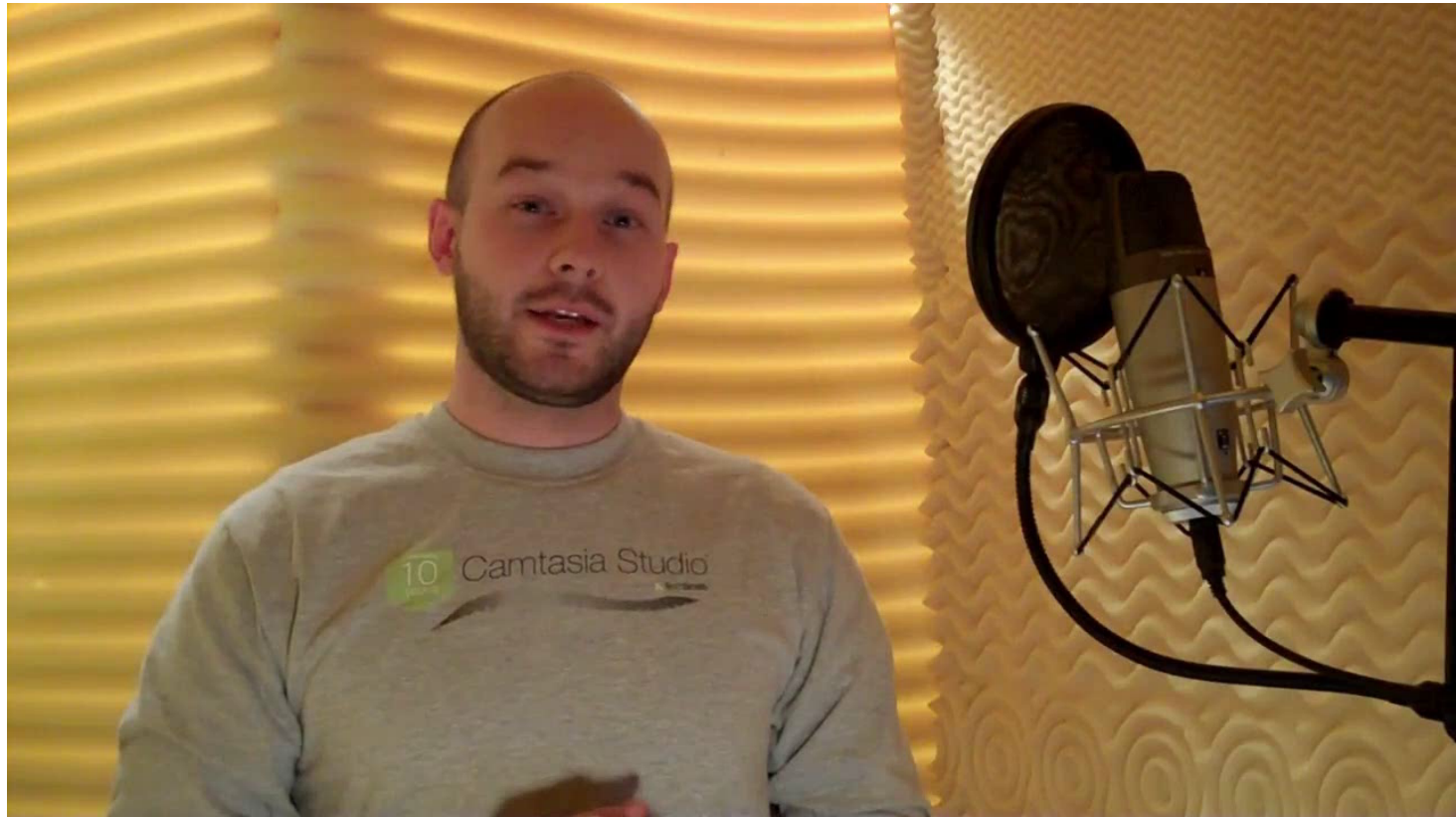
Voiceover Tip: Smile

“As Ekman and Friesen researched the different facial muscular movements, they began to realize that just making the facial gestures affected their emotional state. For example, making an angry facial expression caused their heart rate to start beating faster and their hands to get hot. When they made expressions of sadness or anguish, they started feeling bad inside.”

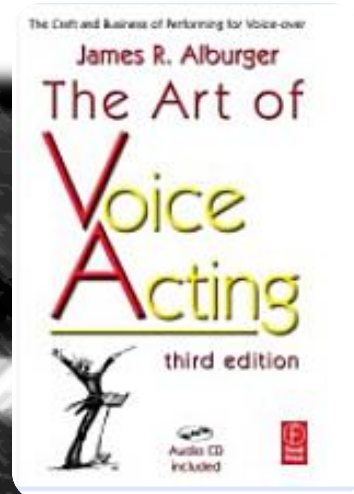
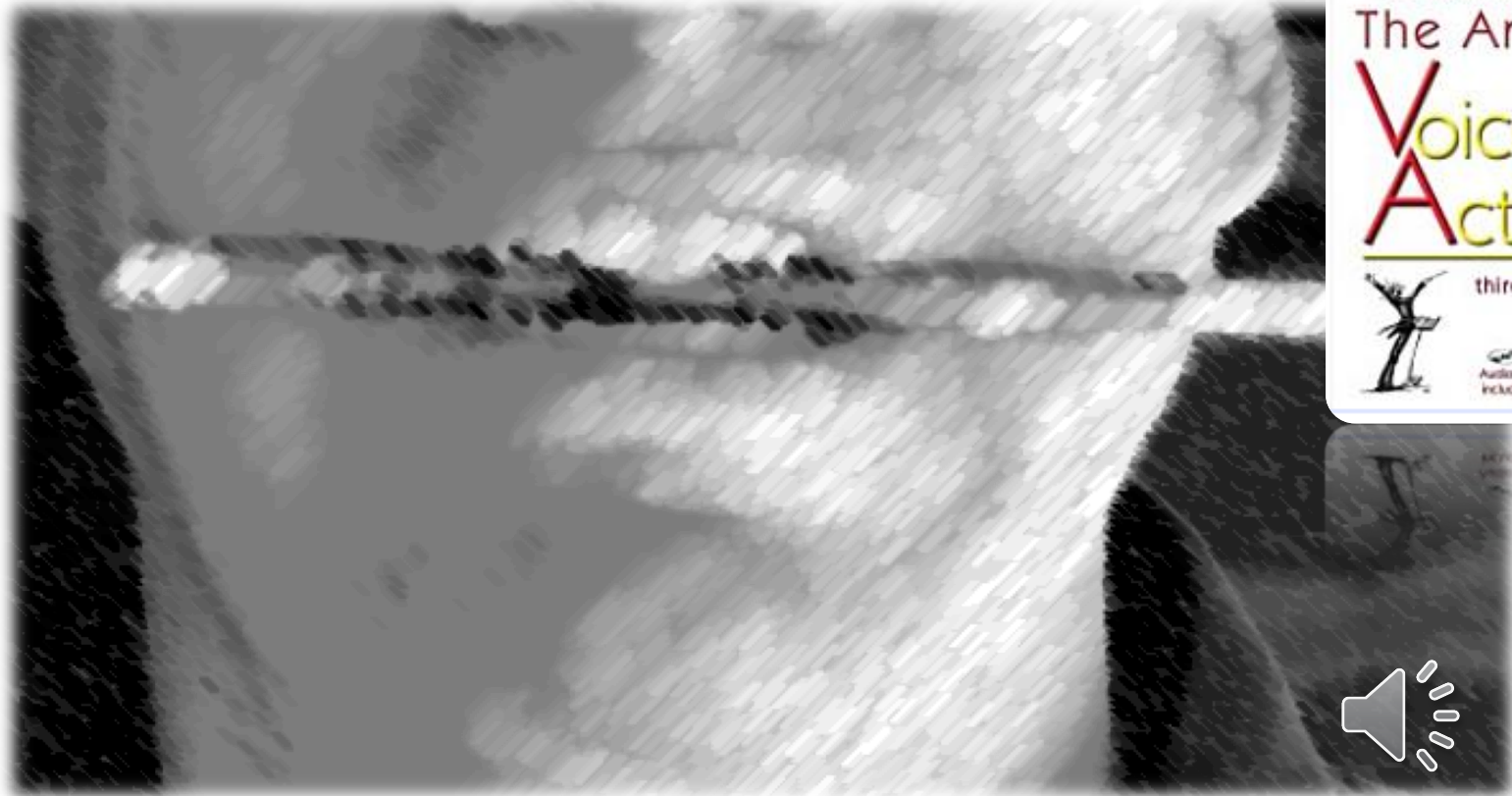
— Malcolm Gladwell



Voiceover Tip: “Learn” to Breathe



Voiceover Tip: Enunciate



Voiceover Tip: Speak to Someone



Voiceover Tips Summary

- Read ahead
- Vary your pitch
- Pause
- Breathe
- Enunciate
- Smile
- Imagine an audience



Voiceover Samples



Bill Bryson, Short History



Ryan Trimble, Les Mis



Harlan Hogan, Demo



David Coursevoir, Star Course



Kurt Hills, real speech



Chip, Aesop's Fables



Connor, TechSmith



Lisa Greenewahl, Demo



Natasha, Wicked Prince



Sample Copy to Read

Once your WordPress site goes live, don't leave your files dormant for months without updating them. Remember that the web is an evolving and dynamic place. On the web, nothing stays the same for long. WordPress software evolves, browsers change, plugins (hopefully you're not using too many) get updated, and exploits -- sometimes very malicious ones, exploits that wipe out your entire database -- get discovered.

All of these changes can affect your site. If you leave your site alone too long, you may find one day, when you log in to write a post, that you can't, because your site has been hacked. You may find that your database is filled with spam and that visitors can't even go to your web address without seeing a virus warning.

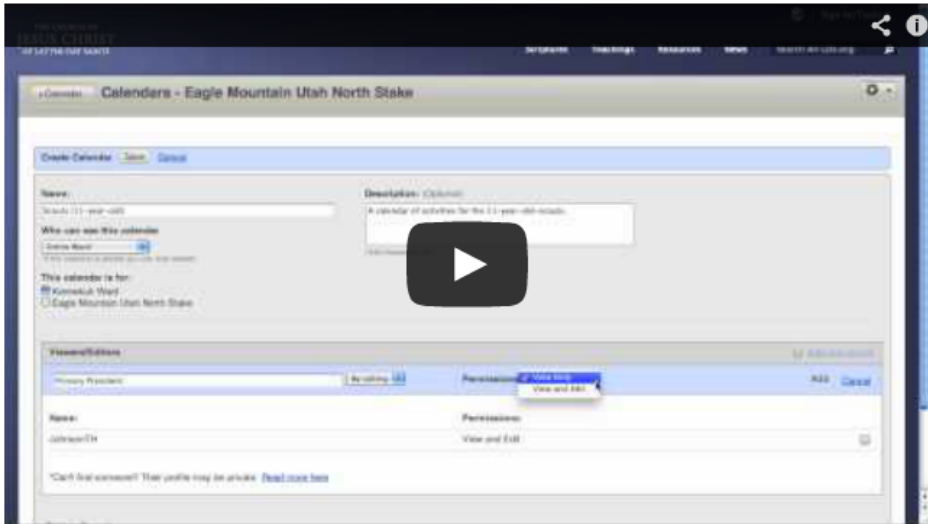
When this happens, you will spend a considerable amount of time restoring your site. You'll also spend a lot of time looking at log files, trying to figure out how in the world the hacker got in. Because until you figure it out, the hacks will happen again and again.



Contents Videos

- Calendar Overview
 - Calendar Help
 - Release Notes
 - Printed Help Materials
 - Getting Help with Calendar
- Initial Setup
 - Rights and Roles
 - Setting Up the Calendar
 - Creating Calendars**
- Calendar Views
 - Agenda, Month, and Week Views
 - Subscribed Calendars and Locations
 - Printing the Calendar
- E-mail and Sync
- Event Scheduling
 - About Event Scheduling
 - Scheduling Events
 - Working with Repeating Events
 - Overcoming Scheduling Conflicts
- Locations
- Reservations

Creating Calendars



STEP 5. PUBLISH AND EMBED YOUR VIDEO



Vimeo Versus Youtube

Vimeo

- Costs \$
- Can replace video without changing URL
- No captions
- Classier
- No ads

Youtube

- Free
- Cannot replace and use same URL/ embed code
- Captions auto sync with voice
- Multilingual captions
- Related videos trashy

Include Scripts

- Put scripts below videos for searchability / scannability
- Link documentation pages to videos and vice versa
- Key question: Ask yourself why your help topics scripts and video scripts are separate.

Other Topics

- Video tutorials for mobile apps
- Video tutorials for developers

Contact Information



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