MAKING HISTORY –
AN INTRODUCTION TO IMOVIE AND DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

GRAHAM SCIBERRAS, RAHS DIGITAL MEDIA OFFICER

- What this webinar is designed to do:

This webinar is designed to do three main things:

i) Provide you with a cursory overview of iMovie's layout, features and the process involved in using the application – more what it can do rather than how to do it

ii) Provide you with a basic understanding of what is involved in creating a short documentary

iii) Provide you with a set of 'next step' resources that will further your understanding of both iMovie and documentary filmmaking

Learning how to use iMovie takes a bit of time, but best of all it's easy to use and fun. The resources I will highlight will give you a more detailed insight into both iMovie and documentary filmmaking, which you can utilise how and when it suits you.

WEBINAR OUTLINE

Part 1 – in introduction to Movie

- What is it? What can I do with it? How do I get it?
- The iMovie Layout
- The Production Process

Part 2 – an introduction to documentary filmmaking

- Treatment and Proposal
- Storyboarding/Shot lists
- Shooting
- Framing
- Audio
- Lighting
- On Location

Part 3 – Where to next?

- Purchasing equipment
- Sourcing funds
- Further Resources

PART 1 – AN INTRODUCTION TO IMOVIE

What is it?

iMovie is a video editing software application sold by Apple. It comes as part of the iLife suite of Mac applications, which includes *iMovie*, *iPhoto*, and the music production application *Garageband*, among others, or it can be purchased from the Apple Mac App Store.

What can I do with it?

With iMovie, users import video footage or image files to a Mac computer from digital video cameras or a hard drive. From there, users can edit the video clips and photos and add titles, music, and effects, perform basic color correction and employ video enhancement tools and transitions such as fades and slides. The end result is a standalone video file that can be distributed and shared online relatively quickly and easily.

How do I get it?

There are three main ways to access iMovie:

- Purchasing a new Apple Mac
- Accessing an existing Mac (iMovie is bundled with iLife)
- Purchasing the application from Apple to upgrade an existing older version

In 2013, Apple revamped its iMovie application, which now features a slightly different layout than its previous versions. It is therefore worth taking a quick look at the current and previous layouts briefly and comparing the two, since you may encounter either depending on the version of Mac operating system you end up working with.

**iMovie '11**   **iMovie '13**

This slide shows the two layouts side by side and you'll notice that each section is roughly in the same position. The process of editing and applying things such as titles, transitions, etc remain similar, with only slight changes to the way of performing tasks. When it comes to showing you how tasks are actually performed in iMovie, I will be working with the latest version of iMovie.

The main sections of the iMovie layout are as follows:

Event Library

The Event Library is the place where the footage you have shot and imported into iMovie is stored. It organises and provides access to your source video. By default, it organises your footage, also called 'Events', by the year in which they were recorded. An *event* is simply Apple's way of organising clips. Clips shot on the same day are gathered together in the same event and titled with the date in which they were imported. When you select an event, its contents appear in the Viewer, which you can find to the right of the Event Library.
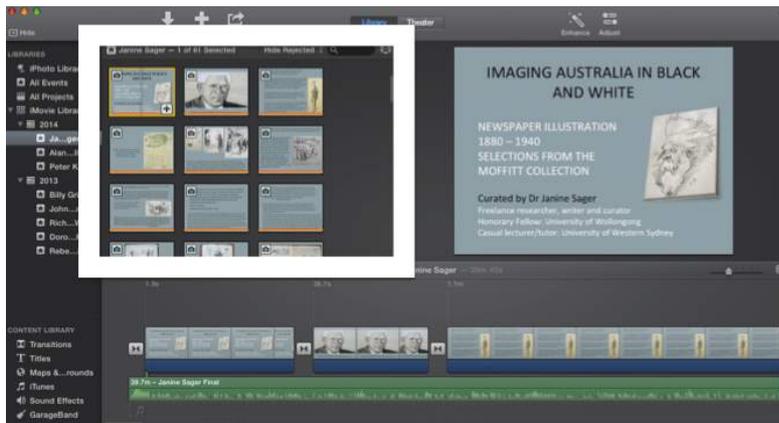
Timeline

The iMovie timeline allows you to see, in a linear fashion, your project as you are putting it together. This means everything from your different clips of footage that you are using from the Event library, any audio, titles, transitions etc. The timeline can be expanded and retracted, depending on the level of editing accuracy or detail that you may require.

Viewer

The iMovie viewer, which occupies the area in the upper-right corner of the iMovie window, is where you view your project or Event video when you skim or play it. It displays whatever is beneath your pointer at any given moment.

Libraries

You can think of a library as the place to store all your stuff: a collection of one or more events. An event is a grouping of footage based on the date and time the clips were recorded, as well as the projects you create with them. Most of the time, you have only one iMovie library, but there are situations in which you might want to have more than one. For example, you might want to back up your current project or create an archive of your events and projects on a separate (external) hard disk. Or you might want to free up storage space on your Mac by moving iMovie events to another hard disk. Or you might want to edit a project on another Mac.

iMovie allows you to create additional library files in different locations on your internal hard disk or on different hard disks. You can access and work on any library at any time from within iMovie. And you can move and copy clips and events between libraries.
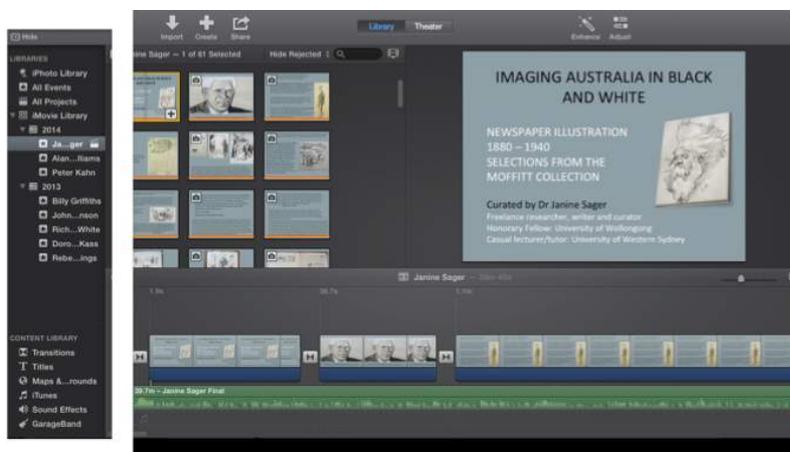
THE PROCESS

### Create a New Event and Import footage

There are several ways to start transferring footage to your Event Library:

- Select New Event from the File Menu and name the event then select Import Media and locate the footage on your computer OR simply drag to the new event window; OR
- Connect a camera via USB to your Mac and locate the footage within the camera on your computer
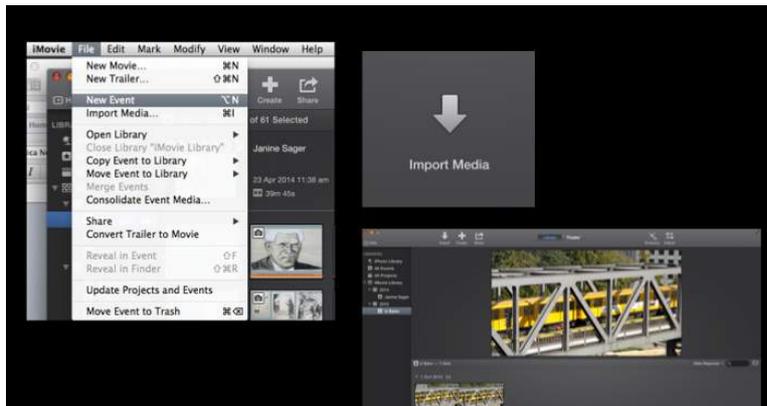
Importing

This slide shows the kind of thing you will see when you connect a camera to your Mac. You can see the different segments of footage as well as the viewer, which will allow you to skim through the footage before importing. Once you have selected the clips that you intend to work with, click Import and the footage will be imported into the New Event that you just created.
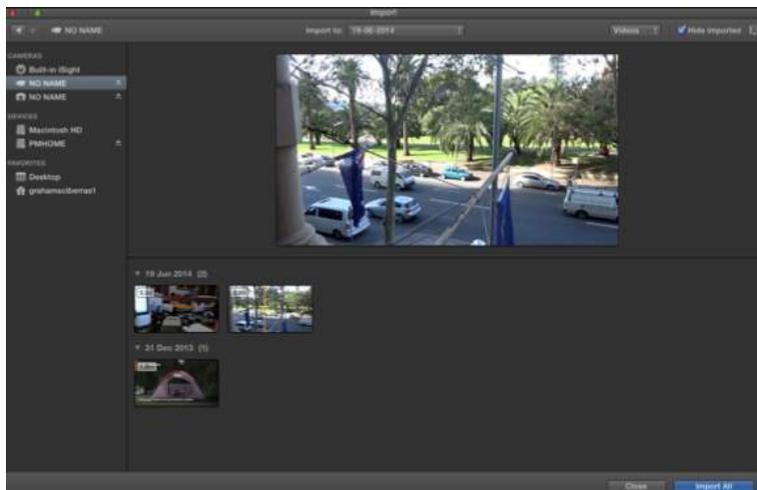
Create the Movie

The next step is to create the Project, which will use event footage that you just imported. To do this you select New Movie, select a theme if you'd like a particular theme, name the project and specify which event footage you will be using. Once you click Create, you are ready to begin transferring the footage in your event or events into your timeline to commence the editing process.


Slide 16. Create the Movie

In this slide we can see some footage already imported into the event browser, an empty timeline that is all set up and ready to go and what will become a snapshot of the project itself (above the event footage). Of course the viewer will always show you what your playhead is hovering over.
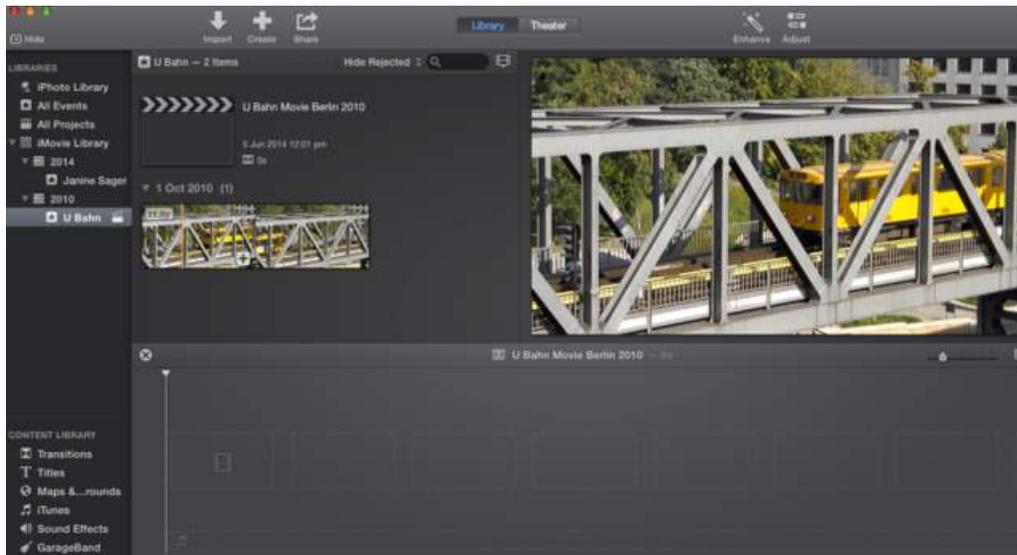
Deciding on footage and adding footage to the timeline

Now the fun part begins – deciding on what segments of your footage will become part of your documentary, adding this footage to the timeline and watching your documentary take shape. Simply use your mouse to highlight the sections of clips in your Event Browser that you want to use and drag and drop the highlighted parts of the clips into your timeline. OR you can drag and drop whole clips into your timeline and edit them there. Either way, this can be quite a lengthy process and obviously the larger your project the more time you will need to invest in this process.
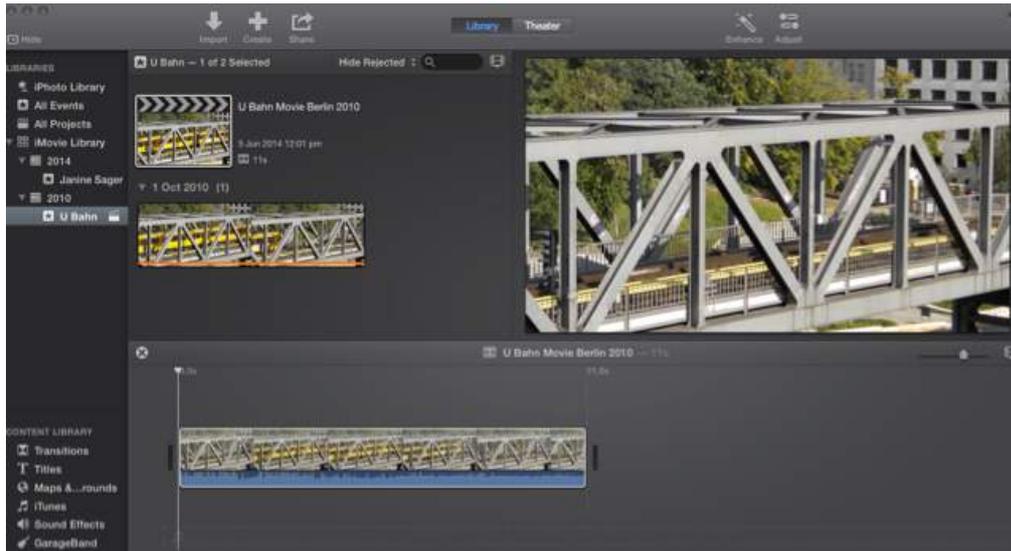
Add footage until complete

This slide gives you an idea of what you will see once the footage has been added to the timeline and your documentary begins to take shape.
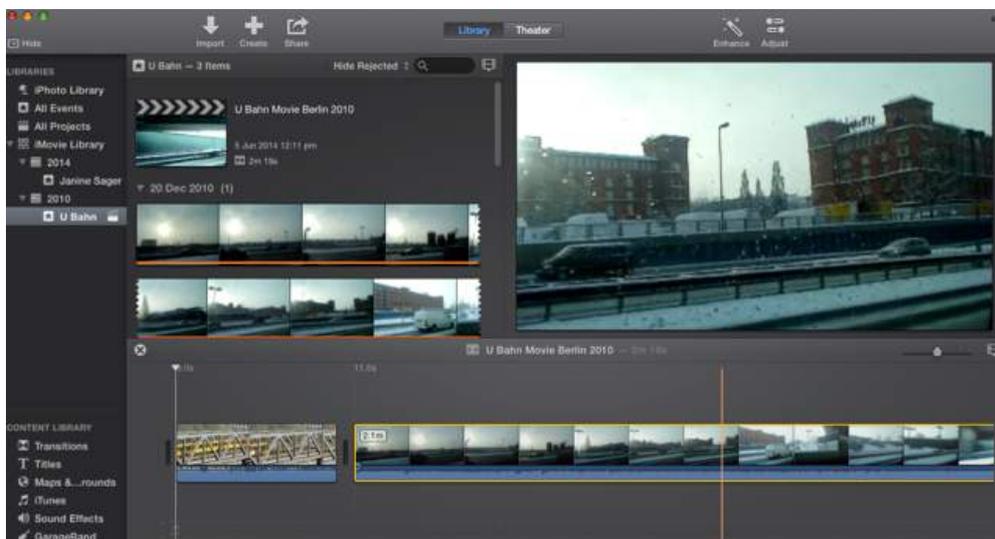
A few basic transitions and Trimming, Splitting and Moving clips

Cut - The most common transition — an instant change from one shot to the next. The raw footage from your camera contains cuts between shots where you stop and start recording

Mix/Dissolve/Crossfade - These are all terms to describe the same transition — a gradual fade from one shot to the next. Crossfades have a more relaxed feel than a cut and are useful if you want a meandering pace, contemplative mood, etc. Scenery sequences work well with crossfades, as do photo montages. Crossfades can also convey a sense of passing time or changing location.

Fade - Fades the shot to a single colour, usually black or white. The "fade to black" and "fade from black" are common in film and television. They usually signal the beginning and end of scenes. Fades can be used between shots to create a sort of crossfade, which, for example, fades briefly to white before fading to the next shot.

Wipe - Wipes are a good way to show changing location. With wipes, one shot replaces another by travelling from one side of the frame to another. There are many examples of wipes used in film often using geometric patterns or shapes.

Trimming, Splitting and Moving Clips

It is easy to trim, split and move clips around the timeline. To trim or lengthen a clip, you simply use the mouse to drag the end of the clip, you can only do this once a piece of footage is highlighted in yellow and of course, how much footage you have actually shot will determine how far forward or backward you will be able to extend a particular clip.

You can also split a clip into two by selecting Split Clip from the Modify menu in iMovie. Where the clip is split will be determined by where the playhead is located along the timeline.

Finally, moving clips around the timeline and arranging clips in the order in which you would like them to appear in your film is as easy as dragging and dropping using your mouse.

Adjustments and Effects

There are a variety of adjustments that can be made to a particular piece of footage:

- **Colour Balance** – can automatically enhance, remove unwanted tints, maximize contrast, match colour from one clip to another, set the correct white balance of a clip (white balance being the achievement of true to life white and grey hues), correct skin tones.

- **Colour Correction** - The colour correction controls include a multi-slider control, a Saturation slider, and a colour temperature slider as well as the ability to adjust shadows, brightness, contrast and highlights

- **Cropping –** the cropping tool allows you to crop, fit to frame, or rotate a piece of footage and apply the Ken Burns effect to a clip. The Ken Burns effect is a type of panning and zooming effect used in video production from still imagery.

- **Stabilisation –** performs stabilisation on a shaky video clip to a given percentage

- **Volume –** adjust volume level of a particular clip or lower the volume of other clips

- **Noise reduction and Equaliser –** reduce background noise of a particular clip or apply equalisation to a clip in the form of such things like hum reduction, bass boost, voice enhancement, etc

- **Speed –** speed up, slow down or reverse the action in a clip

- **Video and Audio Effects –** apply video effects to a clip or clips such as aged film, film grain, sepia, black and white etc; you can also apply audio effects such as echo, telephone, muffled, large room, cathedral, etc

- **Clip Information –** reminds you of the name and duration of the clip

Adding Titles

Titles can be found in the Content Library. iMovie offers a range of title designs to suit the feel of your documentary. You can actually see how the titles will be animated in your final film by dragging the playhead over the thumbnail in the event library, kind of like a quick preview. Once you have decided on a title just drag it to the place in your timeline where you want the title to appear. It can be placed anywhere and be of any length.

Adding Stills

You will notice that I already have the still image on my desktop. To add a still simply drag it into the timeline to where you would like it positioned. Like clips or footage, you can adjust the duration of which the still will be shown for in your film. You can crop or fit the image using the cropping tool, and apply a number of colour and image adjustments.

Transitions

Transitions are also located in the Content Library and like with adding titles, you can preview how the transition will look by hovering over the thumbnail. Drag and drop the transition between the two appropriate clips and adjust the duration by double clicking on the transition itself to the desired length. You can apply a set duration to one or all transitions in your project.

Audio

You will notice an audio file in the desktop of my computer in this slide. This is a short piece of music that I created quickly using Garageband. I exported the audio project and it sits on my desktop as an mp3 file. Like clips of footage and still images, I simply drag the file to the timeline and position it to where I want the music to play in my film. Audio can come from a few different sources – music that I have created myself, from sound effects that are included in iMovie and located in the sound effects section of the Content Library, or music or sounds that I have stored in my iTunes or Garageband libraries. As with still images you can perform a variety of adjustments to your audio by clicking into the 'Adjust' section above the viewer.

Remembering that when you shoot video, you will be capturing audio at the same time. You have the choice of keeping the sound you have captured on video or deleting the sound just by turning the volume down on a particular clip in iMovie. If you add background music to your project this can be played behind the audio recorded on your footage, so that you can hear both tracks of sound at the same time. You can adjust the volume of the background music so that it plays more loudly or softly, which allows you to layer sound in interesting ways. This is when your audio mixing skills come into play.

Narration

The process of adding narration to your film works in much the same way as adding audio, in that once you have exported a file of your narration simply drag it in to the timeline. Record each section of your narration separately so you have individual files to work with. This way you have much more room to play with in terms of lining up your narration with the appropriate footage.

More tips on narration will be touched on in **Part II – Documentary filmmaking**

You have a few options in terms of adding narration to your project:

- Using the Inbuilt microphone in your Mac
- Using Digital Audio Recorder – cheap and reliable – around $200

Zoom H1 Handy Recorder

- Recording audio with your Video Camera – detach the audio from the video footage but this might be a last resort

Exporting

A completed documentary film will comprise of all or a combination of the following components that we've touched on:

- Footage imported from your camera that has been edited and arranged in a way that tells a story
- Transitions between clips and/or scenes that smooth the viewing experience
- Audio soundtrack, possibly some sound effects, narration
- Adjustments made to the clips – audio, visual, etc
- Opening, closing and other titles

Once you are happy with your work, it is time to export the project and there are various options depending on how you plan to use your finished project.

Use the **Share** option as shown in this slide to export your project to your iMovie Theatre (which I will show in a moment) via email, to iTunes, YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo or export the project to your computer as a standalone video file. You will have the option to export in Standard Definition or High Definition, but of course the film size will be larger for a HD video.

Always backup on an external Hard Drive! The file will be exported as an MP4 file – more information on file formats can be viewed in Media College or Video Maker (included in **Further Resources** section at end of the presentation).

The iMovie Theatre
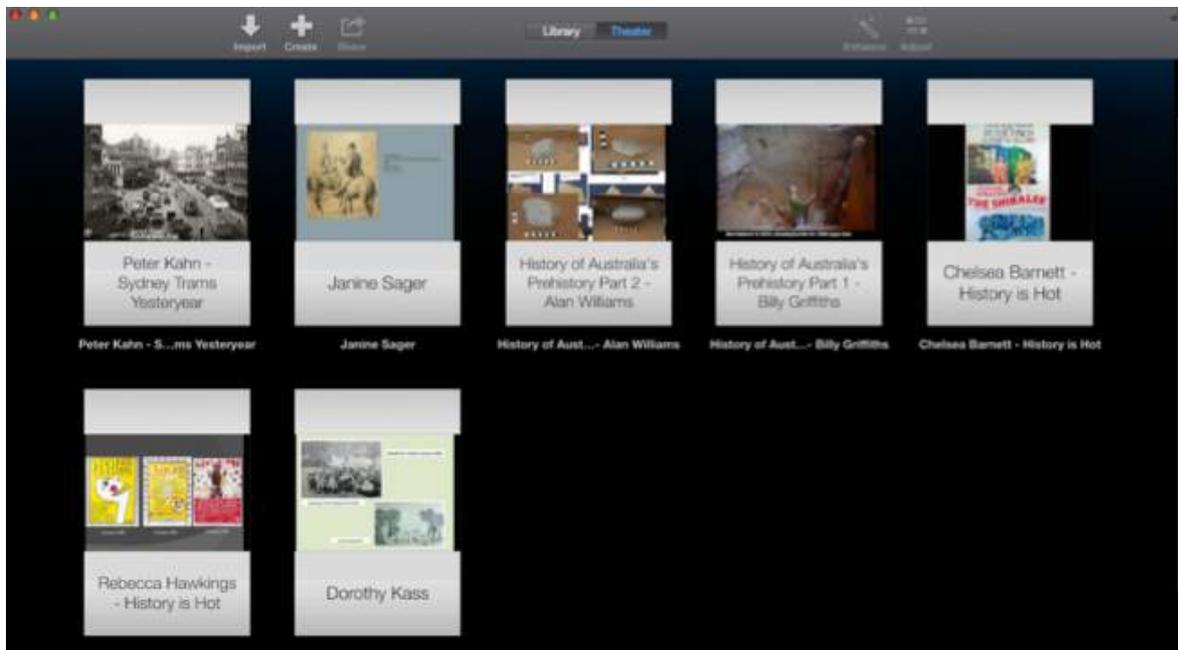
iMovie Theater is a presentation environment where you can view high-quality versions of your most recent projects.

Slide 29. The End Result – Movie file

So that brings us to the end of a basic introduction to iMovie. As I've said, learning iMovie, or any video editing application for that matter, takes time but it is easy to get the hang of. Next we move onto an overview of some of the concepts involved in creating a short documentary film.
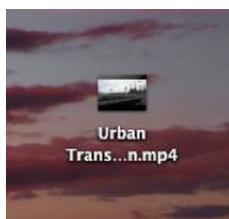
PART 2 - DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING

The Basics

- Decide on a story idea you're passionate about.
- Work out who you're going to interview and what you're going to film.
- Raise money
- Start shooting
- Edit your footage, add some music and (if needed) narration.

The Treatment and Proposal

Scripts are often not used in documentary films—because you cannot predict what will happen when the camera is rolling. In place of a script, filmmakers use treatments, proposals, or even outlines--to describe and help plan a documentary project.

Treatments

- The treatment evokes how an audience will *experience* the film on the screen.
- Tell the reader what they will see and hear on the screen.
- Describe the story and introduce any characters.
- Write colourfully but avoid flowery adjectives and hyperbole where possible, instead demonstrate **how** the film is going to be scintillating and amazing, rather than just saying it will be.
- A treatment is not necessarily brief – usually 2-10 pages double spaced

Proposals

An effective proposal will:

- Tell a good story
- Present a personal, critical perspective on some aspect of the human condition.
- Inform and emotionally move an audience

Usually a proposal will contain the following information:

- Length of work
- Who the intended audience is
- Intended purpose(s) of the film
- Style (Any key stylistic elements in writing, shooting, audio, editing, etc.)

You should only write a treatment or proposal after conducting the initial research. You might visit a library, scan a newspaper archive online, or contact institutions and individuals by phone or email to expand your knowledge of the subject.

Storyboarding/Shot Lists

A storyboard provides a visual representation of your program. It helps you decide what video shots you will need to take in order to edit together good sequences. You should be able to visualise your documentary in your mind before shooting. A storyboard helps you clarify how your documentary will look on the screen. Don't rely on editing to save a haphazardly planned scene. Every edited video tells a story. Just as there is in written stories, your documentary should have a beginning, middle, and end. You introduce your subject and characters in the beginning, expand upon and develop them in the middle, and leave your viewers with some type of conclusion. Storyboards can help you check to make sure you're telling a complete story. You don't need to be a talented artist to storyboard effectively. Even simple stick figures can give people a good idea of what your shot sequence will look like.

Shot List - A list of shots helps in the planning and filming of your movie.

Shooting

When describing different cinematic shots, different terms are used to indicate the amount of subject matter contained within a frame, how far away the camera is from the subject, and the perspective of the viewer.

Shot Variations

Extreme Wide Shot

Generally used as a scene-setting, establishing shot. It normally shows an exterior, eg the outside of a building, or a landscape. There will be very little detail visible in the shot, it's meant to give a general impression rather than specific information.

Wide Shot

In the *wide shot*, the subject takes up the full frame. In this case, the man's feet are almost at the bottom of frame and his head is almost at the top. Obviously the subject doesn't take up the whole width and height of the frame, since this is as close as we can get without losing any part of him. The small amount of room above and below the subject can be thought of as safety room — you don't want to be cutting the top of the head off. It would also look uncomfortable if his feet and head were exactly at the top and bottom of frame.

Medium Shot

Contains a figure from the knees/waist up and is normally used for dialogue scenes, or to show some detail of action. Background detail is minimal, probably because location has been established earlier in the scene - the audience already knows where they are and now want to focus on dialogue and character interaction.

Close Up

This shows very little background, and concentrates on either a face, or a specific detail. This shot magnifies the object and shows the importance of things, be it words written on paper, or the expression on someone's face. The close-up takes us into the mind of a character.

Framing

Framing is a technique used to focus the viewer's attention upon the subject.

Rule of Thirds
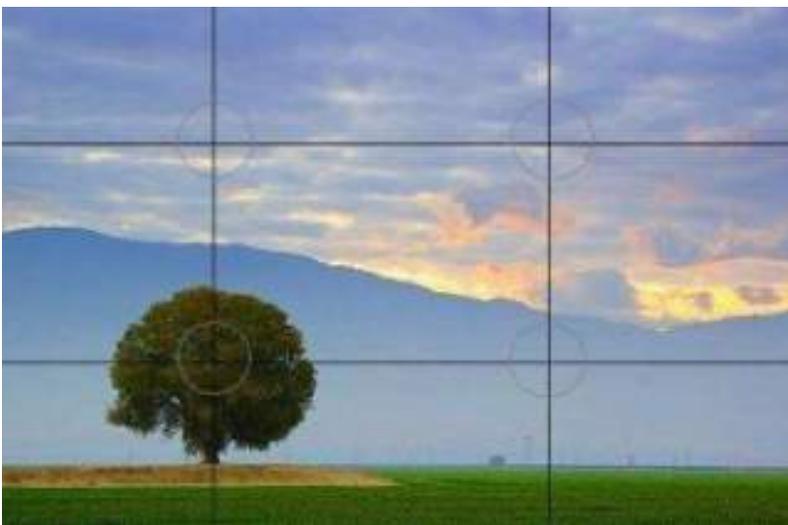
The rule of thirds is a compositional rule in photography, meaning it's how you position your subject in your photo. The rule states that an image should be divided into nine equal parts by two equally spaced horizontal and vertical lines. Your main subject should be placed along these lines or their intersections. In the example the tree is located at the intersection. This is a good example of a photo shot with the rule of thirds in mind.

Look Room

Look room is the space that you leave in front of someone's face on the screen. This space gives the person room to breathe, as well as gives the impression that the person is looking at or talking to someone just off screen. If you don't leave enough look room, your subject will appear to be boxed-in and confined.

Background

Many composition pitfalls lie in the subject's environment. Trees and phone poles, vases or pictures on walls may all cause problems.

Be aware of lampposts, trees or other such objects that are directly behind your subject. A flagpole protruding from the top of an actor's head looks ridiculous, as does a vase that may seem to be balanced on someone's shoulder. Likewise, a power line running through the frame may appear to be going in one of your subject's ears, and out the other. It's best to steer clear of any such visual distractions.

Audio

Equipment

- Headphones – Always use headphones no matter what you are using to shoot, headphones will give the clearest indication of the audio quality

- Tripods – Tripods are an important addition to your equipment – if you don't have access to a tripod be creative - be careful though when mounting a camera on something makeshift, make sure it solid and steady

- To couple that high-quality video with high-quality audio, you're probably going to need an external microphone. Obviously you will need to make sure that the external microphone is compatible with the camera you are using or buying. Not all cameras can be connected together with external microphones so it is worth talking to vendors about your requirements. There are many a number of microphones available to use including a lapel microphone, which is handy for interviews, for example

Narration

- Microphone placement - By setting the microphone 6 to 12 inches from the narrator you'll get a crisp clear voice. Also, make sure the microphone's not right next to a computer so it doesn't pick up the fan noise.
- Record a quick demo to make sure that everything is working as it should.
- Headphones help isolate the audio and you'll be able to hear any problems with the narration better than if you listen with speakers.
- Practice reading it a few times to make sure it flows right. Look for words or phrases where you might stumble while recording.
- Stand up while recording - you'll feel more energized and be able to breathe better. If you do sit, don't slouch. Sit up straight and keep your chin out. Don't let it drop to your chest.
- Have plenty of liquids available - Keep your vocal chords hydrated with clear liquids like water
- Relax and don't rush your words - Practice reading the script. Create a conversational tone. Pretend like you're talking to someone rather than just reading a script.

Mixing

- Mixing is simply the layering together of separate sounds so that they 'fit' in the sound field upon playback. Commonly the aim is to create the illusion that all the sounds were recorded together
- In an application like iMovie it is very simple to control the volume levels of different audio elements in your video – simply adjust the volume of each clip or segment of audio so that they sit together well, without one segment of audio overpowering another
- One thing to remember for now – when mixing narration it is important that the words are easily heard and understood, and that the soundtrack doesn't drown out the other audio elements of your project.

Lighting

Lighting controls the mood of your video, directs the eye of the viewer where you want it to go and emphasise and de-emphasise elements within the frame**.**

1. **Indoor lighting**
    - Sometimes there may not be a great deal of existing light when shooting indoors, make sure you utilise as much indoor lighting as you can – open blinds and shutters, use overhead lights and any lamps available.

2. **Outdoors**
    - Important to know where your sunlight is coming from
    - Direct sunlight into your camera will obviously result in a strong glare
    - Two things to consider when shooting people:
    - Keep sunlight behind people you are interviewing as we want to see their eyes. If they are facing the sun, they are going to squint.
    - Non-participating people (eg. Subjects not looking directly into the camera lens) then keep the sunlight behind you when you are shooting, the subject will be well-lit and you will be using the sunlight as your key light

Three Point Lighting

The Three Point Lighting technique is a standard method used in film.
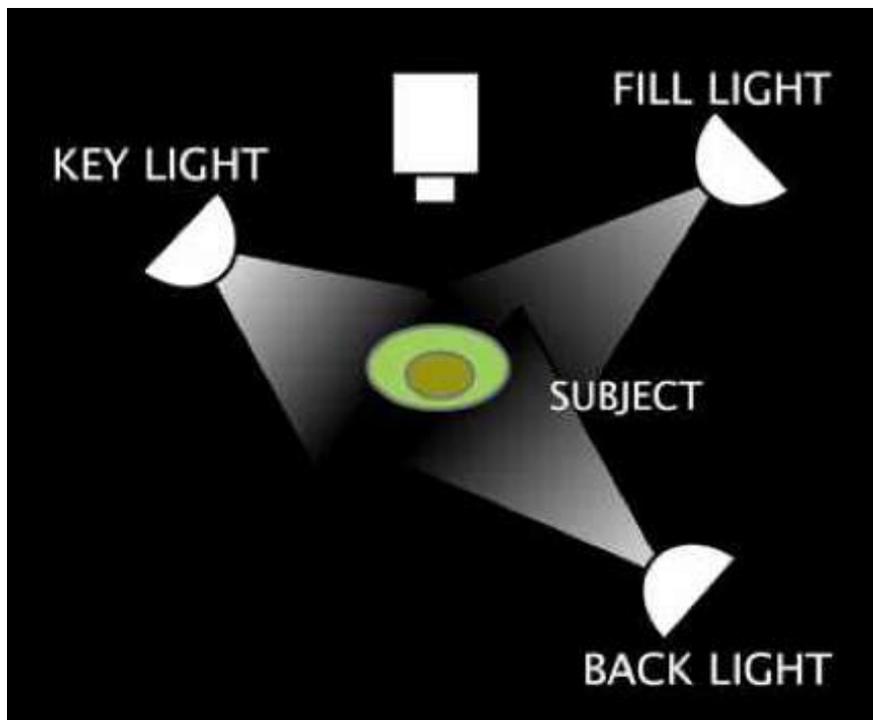
The Three Point Lighting technique uses three lights called the **key light**, **fill light** and **back light**.

Key Light - This is the main light. It is usually the strongest and has the most influence on the look of the scene. It is placed to one side of the camera/subject so that this side is well lit and the other side has some shadow.

Fill Light - This is the secondary light and is placed on the opposite side of the key light. It is used to fill the shadows created by the key. The fill will usually be softer and less bright than the key.

Back Light - The back light is placed behind the subject and lights it from behind. Rather than providing direct lighting (like the key and fill lights), its purpose is to provide definition and subtle highlights around the subject's outlines. This helps separate the subject from the background and provide a three-dimensional look.

You don't, by any means, need to have access to three lights to light a scene properly as just one or two light sources can provide sufficient lighting – it just depends on how you position your lights. More information on position one or two lights can be found on the Media College website.

On Location

1. **Shot List/Scene list**
    - Make it easier on yourself by documenting what you plan to shoot **before** going out to shoot
    - A rough sketch of each shot or scene is a valuable tool when actually shooting and something you can refer to throughout your shoot. Doesn't have to be particularly detailed just exists as a reference point when shooting.
    - It minimises time wastage and smooths the shooting process, especially when you have more than one location to get to in one particular day of shooting

2. **Timing**
    - If using more than one location throughout a shooting day, plan it so there is a particular order to your shooting process.
    - Eg, if one location is only available at a certain time, you will have to work around getting to this location first
    - Complete the more involved scenes first when you are fresh and have energy
    - The easier shots, eg. Establishing shots etc, can be completed last (depending on the light) when you are winding down for the day
    - Shooting requires a fair amount of concentration and takes more time than you might think (lots of standing around time which can be tiring) so a bit of planning helps

3. Practice and Patience

- Know what you are going to shoot and when
- Do a run through of your equipment setup
- Don't speed things up if you don't have to

4. Preparedness

- Charge your camera and have a spare battery.
- If shooting a scene in one position, connect the camera using the power supply so you don't use the battery unnecessarily
- If shooting outdoors think about weather and have an alternative location in mind
- Have a meeting if possible the day before and run through who is doing what throughout the day
- Organise transport and equipment before the shoot!

These tips bring us to the end of the section on documentary filmmaking. They are, by no means, all that is involved in creating a short film but they are the key concepts that, when employed thoughtfully and with preparation, will go far in helping create a solid, interesting and competently-produced short documentary film.

Where to next?

Purchasing equipment

How to go about buying video camera equipment:

Think about what your needs are:

- What kind of zoom capabilities will be required? Will you be taking photographs of documents, for example?
- What is your budget? Factor in things such as: the camera, a tripod, an external microphone, spare batteries, spare memory card, carry bag
- Are the camera and external microphone compatible?

Research online first and talk to vendors face-to-face. Ask questions!

Talk to them about what your plans are - how you will use the equipment, what software you will be using to edit. Chances are they will be interested and willing to give advice according to these plans.

- Like with all purchases of this kind, it pays to shop around!
- The RAHS has just purchased its own video equipment also, so we'd like to extend an invitation for you to come and visit us here at History House to see what we've purchased and to discuss any ideas that you may have in mind regarding possible documentary projects

Sourcing funds

ClubGrants from ClubsNSW

The ClubsNSW ClubGrants scheme have given close to $1 billion to recipients including community groups, across NSW, since this scheme began. There is no standard state-wide deadline for ClubGrants funding and no standard limit on the amount clubs may provide. Eligible expenditure can take many forms, including (but not limited to) one-off funding to buy equipment, for example.

Applications are made through your local club. One particular category is set aside for funding for general community development and support activities.

More information including the process of applying can be found at
http://www.clubsnsw.com.au/community/clubgrants/for-applicants

Further Resources

Media College – MediaCollege.com is a free educational website for all forms of electronic media. We have hundreds of exclusive tutorials covering video & television production, audio work, photography, graphics, web design and more. You'll also find utilities, reference material (e.g. user manuals) and a helpful forum.

www.mediacollege.com

VideoMaker – Online version of monthly magazine covers the use of camcorders, desktop video, editing, lighting, and audio production for novice and expert videographers.

http://www.videomaker.com

Atomic Storytelling Guide – A free PDF which details video composition, video camera basic, the editing process, story planning and more.

static.atomiclearning.com/files/atomic_storytelling_guide.pdf

Windows Movie Maker – The PC equivalent to iMovie is called **Windows Movie Maker** and it works using much of the same processes and concept as iMovie. I have found a really good resource that provides step-by-step guidance on using WMM covering topics such as the ones we have covered today.

http://www.atomiclearning.com/moviemaker2