



# DANDELION

## Research video

Video is one of the most effective communications tools you can use to get your message across. It is engaging, popular and, when so much information is accessed online, there is a readymade channel out there for you to use.

Indeed, in 2018, video accounts for more than 75 per cent of online traffic – and it's rising! That means people are very used to watching rather than reading, making messages on film accessible to a huge audience.

So, video is everywhere, but why does that make it good for researchers to use when trying to explain often very complicated material to diverse audiences with very different needs? **Here are three very good reasons why.**

**1. Video grabs attention** – Video immediately grabs attention. If a video is available on your website, the majority of your visitors (60 per cent) will opt to view it before they read any text. Given this, remember to display your video prominently on your website so visitors can view it immediately and make sure it plays on your site and doesn't link to a different site like YouTube as that takes people away from where you want them to stay – on your website. Also remember that if you do opt to use video, you have to be quick off the mark to retain that immediate attention. Studies suggest that if you haven't captured a viewer's attention in the first six seconds of your film, they will switch off!

**2. Video delivers information effectively** – Video gets your message across fast – in fact, 60,000 times faster than text can, because our brains process imagery that much quicker than the written word. So, however complex the message is you are trying to convey, it is likely that two or three minutes of video will be more effective than lots of text cluttering up your site. Check out the analytics of your website and you are probably averaging about three minutes visiting time per visit – if you are lucky. Given that attention span, think what you can get across to someone investing that same time in a video as opposed to clicking through your site. Being effective in delivering information isn't just about time. Imagery can convey things a text just cannot – emotion and personality, for example, while explaining a visual concept is, of course, much simpler using, well, the visual.

**3. Video is sticky** – While you can explain more information quicker using video rather than with text, it's also the case that video is recalled more easily, with viewers able to recall up to six times more information about a subject after watching a video about it rather than reading about it.



### What projects can use video for

It's little wonder, then, that the EC now ranks video as the most effective form of communication for research projects. Of course, video is no substitute for the presentation of all research activity – complex science, evidence-based evaluation and in-depth policy review, for example. For research projects, however, a video is often there to provide a gateway into its work, to spark an interest that will lead to further exploration by the viewer, or a way to initiate an ongoing relationship, a way to sell an idea, change behaviour or a way just to make people think. With this in mind, **Dandelion has identified several types of video** for projects to consider when getting visual with their work. Each approach and style will serve a different purpose for your project but each, of course, will still benefit from all the advantages video has as a means of research communication.

## Examples of types of video

Animation is a very effective way to introduce a theme or a concept and so introduce your project. There is huge scope to be imaginative, thus avoiding a simple run through of work packages and partner information (yawn) that so many project presentations contain. They allow you to explain what you are doing, why you are doing it and what you hope to achieve in an exciting, engaging and meaningful way.

Animation lets you visualise often complex information and simplify things for the viewer, while at the same time can let you be a bit playful, using clever, memorable transitions and visual links and humour. Animation also lets you easily present your project as a consistent brand, using the project's brand identity as a basis for your colour palette and any geometric shapes or fonts used.

When introducing your project to the world, remember to keep it short and simple. You can follow the simple

structure of presenting

- The context of the project – the problem/challenge you are seeking to address
- The aims and objectives – what you looking to do about it
- The methodology – how you are going doing that – and who is doing it as you are introducing the project and want to stress your expertise]
- The expected outcomes – what you are hoping to achieve – the outputs
- The hoped-for impact – what these outputs will lead to – the outcomes, how the problem or challenge has been solved or addressed and the benefits this leads to

This gives you a nice, circular story, with a conclusion that will associate your project as one that meets a particular need. With suitable music, an engaging voiceover and, importantly, added sound design (the little plops, blips and whistles that add to the overall atmosphere of an animation), animation works.

### Project interviews

Using interviews with researchers, experts and those affected by the research, projects can demonstrate clearly how they are working to solve a problem or meet a challenge.

These interviews can be a mix of opinion, facts and figures and research ambition. When cut all together, they can tell a story about an issue that is being addressed and this can often inspire viewers to want to find out more. In this sense, it frames the project within the context of the issue and puts it at the centre of the solution, without being too 'salesy' or too focused on the project rather than what it is trying to do.

When making a film like this, it is important to have the structure of the story clear from the start – the basic narrative. This way you can frame the interviews you do to ensure you get answers to the right questions to tell that story. A possible narrative structure to follow would be:

- What is the problem or challenge – an expert view
- How does this problem/challenge affect people – expert and public's view
- What's been done about it before – public's view about how this has or hasn't worked; expert's view of what has been tried
- What should be done – different possible solutions, from opinions to evidence-based

- What this project is doing and how is it doing it – researcher, project participant explain
- What will be the outcomes – researcher (hoped for) expert (could it work) public (how will that affect me)
- Wrap-up opinions – quick-fire soundbites from all that summarises all of the above.
- End on an optimistic quote about how your project will make a difference

While this is a fairly linear structure, by cutting in and out of it, adding additional, supporting footage over the interviews and linking with a narration, the film can be fast-paced and engaging.

### Project demonstration

Many projects are hard at work in a variety of locations, doing a variety of interesting things. If that's you, film it! In the context of a well-told story, people will be interested in this stuff.

It may include experimentation in a lab, the development of new processes in the workplace or on the factory floor, new equipment being tested or, most likely with SSH research, the engagement with real people.

Filming the project in action is exciting, but remember, you still need to tell a story and, in this case, this should focus on what you are doing to address a problem or challenge and, in some cases, demonstrating actual outcomes.

The film can, of course, contain interviews and it is most likely these will be with members of the project team who can best explain what is happening and, importantly, why. Keep in mind

that the film still needs to frame the activity, so you must have your basic structure in place but you could play around with this, mixing problems, solutions and outcomes out of order, for example. Perhaps,

- Solution in action
- What was it like before
- The need for change
- How this was achieved

### Project workshop

Often, an SSH project will demonstrate much of its output through workshops and collaborative events with stakeholders. If so, film these, too.

Don't try to film every interaction, round table or presentation in any wrap-up film about these occasions, but get vox-pops of people attending and ask them what they thought of things.

Maybe ask them:

- What is the problem or challenge?
- Why did you come? What is your expertise?
- What was discussed? What was said?
- How does this problem/challenge affect people – expert and public's view
- Will it work? Do you agree?
- What should happen?
- What does the future look like to you?

Cut together, using different responses from different people, you can present an

interesting, structured narrative that tells the story of the workshop and what it has achieved very neatly indeed.

Unless you are trying to entice others along to future events you are holding, remember to avoid simply asking people to tell the camera why this event was so good, what they liked about the event. This film should not be about the event, but about the issues being discussed.

### Project round table

Of course, there is value in filming the whole workshop if it is an interesting round table discussion for example, particularly if you are trying to disseminate important research or policy discussion to an expert audience.

This is relatively easy and can be achieved well with relatively little editing. Just have a standing camera that covers the whole table and, if you want to make it more professional, another one that can focus in on each speaker as he or she speaks. In the final edit, the standing camera can then cover the movement of the camera focused on the speakers as it moves from one to the other.

The important thing to remember here is sound – your viewer needs to be able to hear what is being said, so relying on the mic in the camera will not cut it.

If there is audio provision for the speakers that runs through a mixing desk, then it is possible that can feed straight into the camera. That would be ideal and you would then have perfect sound at all the important bits – when the speakers speak.

If not, run a mic on to the desk from the camera and ask each speaker to pass it on to the next when they speak. That will be better than relying on the camera mic from far away.

Of course, those solutions are very much applied to the project doing all this DIY. If you have the budget, it would be best to get the professionals in to do this type of filming. Remember, this will be longer than the 2-3-minute instant engagement video that is so effective. This will be long and so needs to look and sound good, even if it is only aimed at the expert audience.

### Brand awareness

Video is a great way to build awareness of your brand – make people aware of your project and what you are trying to do. It is also a great way of maintaining brand awareness and keeping you in your audience's mind.

A second way to do this is by making very short – 5-seconds – branded messages you can send out in emails or on newsletters. They don't need to say much and can simply be to wish contacts a happy Christmas or remind them of an event. Done with video, these not only do the job in hand, but they keep your brand alive.

### Common to all

Music can enhance a film and add to its appeal and help it resonate with its audience – or it can destroy a film. It is important to get this right.

Sound effects are very important in animation, adding character, humour and depth to a story. Don't over use this stuff, however, and make sure it doesn't detract from what is being said.

Remember your credits – you need to reference the project partners in your project film and it's best to do this with their logos in the credit sequence at the end. You also MUST add the credit to the EU for your funding and include the EU flag in that as well.

## Quick guide to making a research video

Our first advice is, if you want something really good, that keeps to time, looks professional, engages and resonates with the selected target audience and makes people smile and remember you – get the experts in! Film making is an art and doing it well takes time and experience. Don't presume you can do it as well as those who dedicate their lives to it.

But, if you want to do it yourself, it's perfectly possible and great fun! And, even if you do get the pros in, our advice would be to be involved as much as possible in the message you want to get out. You know your project better than anyone else out there, so make sure whoever you get to tell your story, gets their facts right. So, whether it's a DIY job or one left to the professionals, consider the following simple tips when making your film.

**Your angle** – Start by coming up with an idea, an angle that will make your project stand out – is it a real-life story, an example, a thought-provoking metaphor, will you use humour. Think of the unexpected, make it surprising. Make it visually attractive.

**Write a script** – whatever type of film you are making, think of the story as a whole – beginning, middle and end – get the structure right and work out how this will be told. Write the voiceover if that is needed as this will be a useful guide for what is filmed.

**Think of the audience** – while conceiving your idea and angle and writing your script, always think who you want to view this film. Who is it for, what are you trying to tell them and what can you reasonably expect them to understand? How can you make it personal to them, resonate with them? Think also about why they would share it to help your chances of getting exposure online; aiming for an emotional engagement will help will all this.

**Create a storyboard** – think in images and visualise every element of the script; think the memorable. This will be different for animation and location shooting, demonstration and interviews. With animation, you can do almost anything (cost permitting of course), while there's not so much you can do with old Bob in front of the camera talking about his work – or is there?

**Plan the film development** – shooting schedules, having the right people in place at the right time, booking the equipment, crews, sorting locations, editing software, editing time and film promotion all need to be planned.

**Get clearance** – consent forms from participants, royalties on music, sound, stock footage, and images must all be secured, while if you are forming from participants, royalties on music, sound, stock footage, and images must all be secured, while if you are forming from participants, royalties on music, sound, stock footage, and images must all be secured.

**Strategy for driving traffic** – Perhaps one of the most over-looked tasks is how you are going to get people to see your brilliant new film. Post in online (YouTube), host it on your website, now how are you going to get people there to watch it? You will need a strategy to drive people there using social media, press release, newsletters etc and it works best when this is coordinated to build a critical mass of interest.

**Press release** – remember, the press will not be interested in the fact that you have made a new film, however good it is. Use the film to support a story the press WILL be interested in – it is a good way of drawing them into the story making them more likely to run with it.

