

A DIY GUIDE TO PLANNING, SHOOTING,
AND SHARING GREAT VIDEO
FROM *USA TODAY TALKING TECH* HOST

VIDEO NATION

JEFFERSON GRAHAM



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Video Nation

A DIY guide to planning, shooting, and sharing great video from USA TODAY's Talking Tech host
Jefferson Graham

Peachpit Press

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To my wife, Ruth, and my parents, Jerry and Judy.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jefferson Graham is a longtime technology columnist for *USA TODAY* and host, producer and editor of the *USA TODAY*'s "Talking Tech" and "Talking Your Tech" video shows, which feature interviews with tech newsmakers, reviews of the latest gadgets, and celebrity visits. Apple products such as the iPad, iPhone, and Final Cut Pro X were seen early on "Talking Tech," one of a small handful of outlets to get early peeks at the new Apple releases. Recent guests on "Talking Your Tech" have included Selena Gomez, Carson Daly, and Jeff Dunham; tech stars such as Zynga CEO Mark Pincus and Pandora's Tim Westergren; and, YouTube breakouts iJustine and the Annoying Orange himself, Dane Boedigheimer. All the shows are produced professionally on the same DIY budgets described in this book.

Jefferson is the author of nine books, including *Vegas: Live and In Person* and *Salesman of the Century* (with infomercial legend Ron Popeil). He is also an accomplished Manhattan Beach, California-based portrait photographer, videographer, and jazz guitarist.



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION xiv

1 EVERYBODY IS A STAR 2

Be Your Own One-Man Band 4

The Basic Elements of a Web Video Production 7

Start with the Idea 8

Go with Your Gear 8

Plan Your Shoot 9

Shoot with Savvy 10

Interview Intelligently 10

Master Watchability: B-roll 11

Perfect Postproduction 12

Edit with Ease 12

Share It with the World 13

Track Your Success 13

Real-Life Scenario: Producing “Talking Tech” 13

2 WHAT TYPE OF VIDEO ARE YOU PRODUCING? 18

Styles of Web Video 20

The Parody or Comedy 20

The Advertorial 20

The Product Demo 21

The Vlog 22

The Webisode 22

The Tutorial 23

The Interview 24

Producing an Interview 24

Booking the Interview 25

Interview Tips: The Five Best Questions 25

Taking It to the Web 26

Producing a Small-Business Video	27
Promoting Your Business	27
Taking Your Ideas Directly to the Web	28
Speaking to Your Customers	28
Ideas for Any Business	31
<i>How Andrew “Fundy” Funderburg Uses Video to Sell His Business</i>	32
Producing a Parody	34
How the Pros Do It	34
Quick Step-by-Step: Creating a Parody	35
Where Ideas Are Born: Producing “Talking Tech” 125 Times a Year!	39
<i>Justin and Her Online Parodies and Vlogs</i>	40
Ideas Pitched to Me	39
Ideas I Seek Out	42
Give It a Try	43
<i>How Dane Boedigheimer Comes Up with Ideas for “Annoying Orange”</i>	44

3 GEAR GUIDE 46

The Right Camera for You	48
Entry-Level Video Cameras	50
Point-and-Shoot Camcorders	50
Point-and-Shoot Still Cameras	51
Mirror-less Compact Cameras	52
The iPhone	54
The iPad	54
Digital SLRs	55
Wearable Cameras	58
Lighting Equipment	59
One Step Beyond Entry Level	60
Midrange	61
On-Camera Light	62

Audio Gear	63
Lavalier Microphones	63
Stick Microphones	64
Mic Flags	65
Shotgun Mics	66
Audio Recorders	66
Best Bets for Audio Recording	67
Camera Mounts	68
Tripods	68
Tiny Tripods	68
Basic Tripods	69
Better Tripods	69
Monopods	69
Steadicam	71
Accessories for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch	72
Stabilizers	72
Microphones	73
Other Attachments	74
Video-Editing Software	75
My Gear	77

4 HOW TO USE YOUR GEAR 78

The iPhone	80
Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPhone	80
Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPad	81
Apps for the iPhone and iPad	82
Point-and-Shoot Cameras	86
DSLR Cameras	88
Video Cameras	90

5	PREPRODUCTION PLANNING	92
	Preplanning Basics	94
	Make Arrangements for Your Shoot	95
	Plan to Arrive Early	95
	Visualize Your Setup	96
	Plan Your Camera Positions	97
	Make an Equipment Checklist	97
	Decide Where to Place Your Subject	98
	Decide If You'll Do a Stand-Up Shot	100
	Be Ready to Do B-roll	100
	Prepare for Sound	102
	Write Out Your Interview Questions	103
	The Importance of Planning: Lessons Learned	104
6	PRODUCTION DAY	108
	Getting Started on Location	110
	Camera Placement	111
	Position Your Subject	112
	Audio Check	114
	<i>Mystery Guitar Man (Joe Penna) on Making Videos</i>	116
	Lighting	118
	Outdoor Light	118
	Window Light	120
	One-Light and Two-Light Setups	121
	Pro-light Setup	124
	Softboxes	124
	LED Lights	125
	<i>One-Man Band: Boua Xiong</i>	126

Production Examples	128
Shooting with an iPhone	128
Interviewing and Collecting B-roll on Location	129
Business Videos Shouldn't Be Boring	131
Remote Interviews	132
<i>Valentina Trevino's Weekly Art Painting Videos</i>	134

7 SHOOTING TECHNIQUES FOR DIFFERENT CAMERA SETUPS 136

Shooting with One Camera	138
Check Lighting	138
Position the Camera	138
Check Sound	139
Frame the Subject	139
Start Shooting	140
Take Shots for B-roll	141
Final Pointers	141
Shooting with Two Cameras	141
Framing the Subject and Yourself	141
Start Shooting	142
Shooting with Three Cameras	143
Framing and Positioning	143
Interesting Angles	143
Important Tips	145
Avoid an Embarrassing Shoot	145
Keep Things Moving	146
Stay on Topic	146
Wrap It Up	147
Remember the Five Ws of Interviewing	147
<i>Penn Jillette</i>	148

8 VIDEO EDITING	150
Entry-Level Editing Programs	152
Hardware Required for Editing	153
Windows Recommendations	154
Mac Recommendations	154
External Drives	155
Card Readers	156
The Essentials of Video Editing	156
Getting Started with the Editing Workflow	158
The Basic Editing Process	158
Import and View Your Footage	159
Create a Script and Record Narration	159
Add the B-roll	159
Using Simple Video-Editing Software	161
Movie Maker for Windows	161
iMovie for Mac	162
Adobe Premiere Elements	169
Editing Video on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch	173
Step-by-Step Editing with the iMovie App	173
Real-World Scenario: The Bloggin', Vloggin' Grandma	175
How It Started	176
Production Values	177
Gear	177
The Shoot	178
The Editing Process	179
Promotion	180
The Latest	181
The Vlog Process	181

9	ADVANCED VIDEO EDITING	182
	Introducing Final Cut Pro X	184
	A Quicker Way to Edit	184
	The Layout	185
	Hands On in Final Cut Pro	187
	1. Create a Desktop Folder	187
	2. Create an Event	187
	3. Create a Project	189
	4. Import Footage	189
	5. Let's Edit!	190
	6. Share the Video	195
	Multicamera Editing	196
	Putting All the Clips Together	196
	More on Creating Multicam Clips	197
	Angle Viewer	198
	Sound Enhancements	199
	Chroma Key Effect	199
10	SHARING THE FINAL PRODUCT	202
	Exporting Videos	204
	Choosing a File Format	204
	Saving Videos with Premiere Elements	204
	Saving Files in iMovie	206
	Exporting in Final Cut Pro X	206
	Finding a File in the Future	206
	Best Source for Answers to Compression Questions	207
	YouTube Rules	208
	Final Check	209

Uploading Videos to the Web	209
A Home for Your Masterpieces	209
Uploading to YouTube and Creating Your Channel	211
Creating a Title	212
Categories	213
Importance of Words	214
Tagging	215
More on Links	215
Scream It to the World	216
Subscriptions	216
Views	217
Making It Viral	218
Tweaking Your Channel	219
Facebook	221
Twitter	222
Summing It Up	223
INDEX	224

INTRODUCTION

All kinds of people today are creating video for the web. Whether you're a small business owner, a blogger, or a web show host, or if you're simply doing some marketing for your company or yourself, right now you may be all on your own in learning how to put that video together, make it look good, and get it to go viral.

Learning filmmaking and production techniques can be a daunting task because most books and resources cover productions with big budgets and multiple crew members. Resources that cover only the camera or video editing aren't particularly helpful either if you don't know the basics about video production.

This is where *Video Nation* comes in. I wrote this book to provide the layman with real-world, practical advice, from what I learned over the years producing a minimum of two videos per week on a DIY budget for *USA TODAY*'s "Talking Tech" and "Talking Your Tech" shows.

In this book, you'll learn what equipment you need to get started to create your own "one-man band" productions, including advice on shooting with DSLRs, point-and-shoot cameras, and iPhones. You'll get the best techniques for setting up, preparing questions for, and interviewing a subject. I've included detailed descriptions of working with sound and lighting for a variety of indoor and outdoor scenarios. You'll even get to take your video to the next level by using multiple cameras.

Once you've shot your video, I give you step-by-step instructions for using editing programs such as Apple iMovie, Adobe Premiere Elements, and Final Cut Pro X. After that, you'll learn how to upload your video to YouTube, create a channel, market your video with Twitter and Facebook, and earn money from your efforts. Throughout the book, you'll get tips on developing fresh new ways to promote your business or yourself.

It's my hope that, after reading the book, you'll know how to create videos that look professional and also raise your profile in your business or your personal endeavors.

Videos Accompanying the Book

Throughout *Video Nation*, TV icons (such as the one shown in the margin here) indicate a video clip is available for you to watch. You can download the clips once you register your book at www.peachpit.com/videonation. More than 30 clips are available to show some of the concepts from the book in action, including how to set up a shoot, get better audio results, light an interview subject, and edit your video. You'll also see some behind-the-scenes videos of interviews with Mike Tyson, Adam Carolla, Valerie Bertinelli, Penn Jillette, J.B. Smoove, and more.

I'll add more videos to the resources page at www.peachpit.com/videonation, so make sure to check back for additional videos.

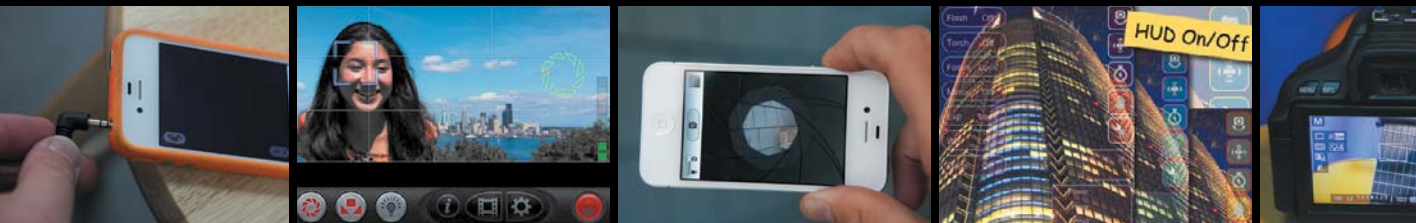


Each numbered video corresponds to an accompanying short video clip at www.peachpit.com/videonation.

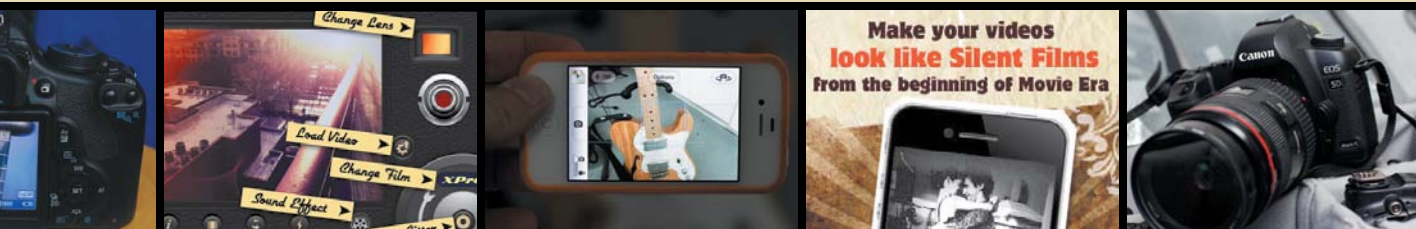


HOW TO USE YOUR GEAR

4



NOW THAT YOU have an idea of your video gear options and what might work for you, you're eager to get started, right? Let's take a quick look at how to use your gear for video—mobile phones and devices, point-and-shoot cameras, video cameras, or digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras. There are a few good apps and some hardware I'll recommend along the way. If you already know the basics about your camera, feel free to skip over this chapter.



THE IPHONE

So you want to use your iPhone as a video camera? No problem, but you'll need an iPhone 4 or iPhone 4S—the two models with the improved camera—and a few dollars to spend for a handful of creative apps that will take your videomaking to the next level.

Here's the iPhone 4S advantage: You get an excellent 8-megapixel camera that rivals any point-and-shoot—and it's always with you. Be sure to shoot in decent light for best results. You'll also want to stabilize the iPhone in some way (see Chapter 3). Whether it's the Owle mCAMLITE or the Studio Neat Glif iPhone Tripod Mount, it doesn't really matter. Just be sure to keep the camera as steady as possible.

Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPhone

Let's go through the basic steps of shooting a video with the iPhone.

- 1 On your iPhone's home screen, select Settings then turn on Airplane mode (Figure 4.1). That way, no one will bother you with a call, text, or status update while you're shooting.

Figure 4.1 Set the iPhone to airplane mode so you won't be interrupted during shooting.





Figure 4.2
Make sure to shoot with your phone in a horizontal position. As you can see, when the iPhone is vertical, the sides of the image are cut off.

- 2 Open the Camera app on the iPhone. Slide the Camera icon to Movie mode.
- 3 Hold the camera horizontally. This is crucial. Shooting vertically is one of the biggest mistakes I see. Because the video plays back in a horizontal orientation, you'll lose the sides of your video and have annoying black bars and a teeny image in the middle (Figure 4.2).
- 4 Click the red Record button at the bottom of the screen to start recording video. Click the button again to stop recording.

When shooting, try to keep your hands as steady as possible if you're not using a tripod mount. Also, hold the camera as close as possible to your subject (if you bypassed the microphone option) to do your best to pick up sound.

When the take is finished, the clip will go directly to the Camera Roll area of the iPhone, where photos and videos are stored.

Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPad

Shooting video with the iPad is just as easy:

- 1 Tap the camera icon on your iPad's home screen.
- 2 On the bottom-right corner you'll find a toggle. Tap it to switch it to the right, on the video icon.

You'll also see the button that switches between the front, FaceTime camera, and the rear, iSight camera.



Learn how to connect a microphone to the iPhone by watching the video at www.peachpit.com/videonation.

- 3 In the middle of the right side of the screen (and next to the home button) you'll see the record button. Tap this to start recording. Tap it again to end recording.
- 4 To watch the video you just recorded, tap the thumbnail in the lower-left corner. You can also find the video in your Camera Roll area.

Apps for the iPhone and iPad

Numerous apps on the market let you tweak the image results from your still or video camera in the iPhone or iPad. There are just as many if not more apps that are available to assist you in your productions. I'll cover just a few of these here.

NOTE All of these applications are also available for the iPod Touch.

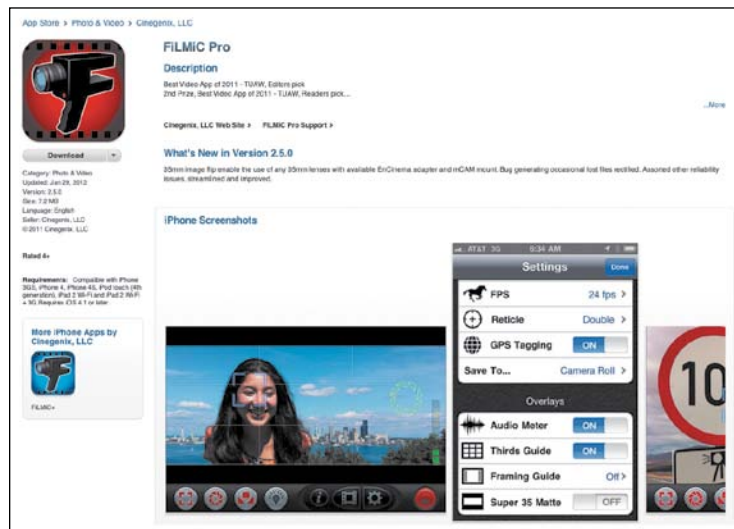
Filmic Pro

One big drawback of shooting video on the iPhone is that you can't adjust the exposure as you can with a "real" camera. There are no f-stop or shutter-speed settings. That's where Filmic Pro comes in (Figure 4.3). With this \$3 app, you can tweak exposure slightly, opt for variable frame rates, and get audio-monitoring levels and focus options that you wouldn't have if you just zapped open the Camera app on the iPhone. For the exposure, it will never be as accurate as a camera with f-stops. Instead, you get a selective circle that you place over a section of the image to make it darker or lighter. It's not perfect, but it's better than nothing. Beyond saving the project to the Camera Roll, you also get presets to upload it directly to a variety of sites, including Vimeo, YouTube, Dropbox, and Facebook.



Watch the video at www.peachpit.com/videonation to discover how to adjust exposure using Filmic Pro

Figure 4.3 The Filmic Pro app for the iPhone is essential for anyone shooting with an iPhone.



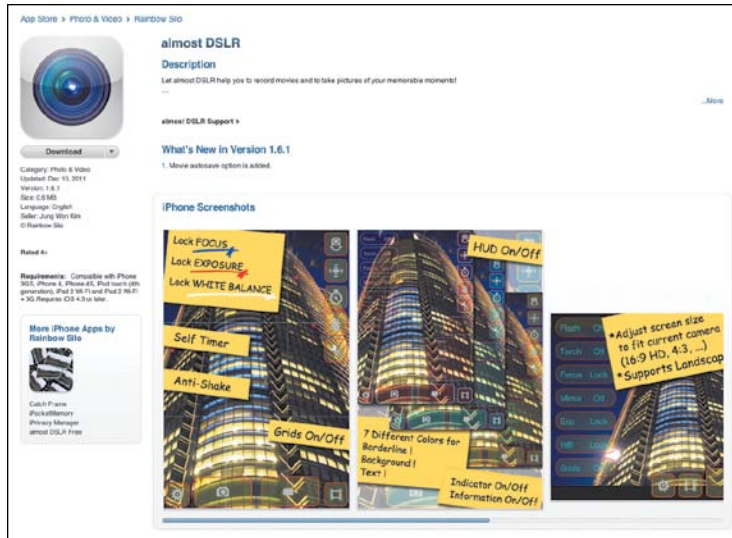


Figure 4.4 Almost DSLR is a great app for locking focus and exposure, setting white balance, adding GPS data to pictures, and much more.

Almost DSLR

As with Filmic Pro, with this \$2 app you can adjust and lock focus and exposure, plus tweak white balance, adjust frame rate, and click on a self-timer (Figure 4.4). I recommend this app for anyone who has an iPhone and wants to shoot short films.

DollyCam

It's hard to keep any camera steady without a tripod, and the iPhone is no exception. There's no grip to grab onto the device, as you have with a camera, and every twitch and itch shows up loud and shakily clear when you're shooting video. So we welcome the DollyCam app with open arms (Figure 4.5). It's not an expensive mount, or a slider to drool over, like the \$130 iPhone Mobislider, but for \$3, DollyCam turns your iPhone into a steadycam by stabilizing your image, and it does an amazing job. You start off by shooting your video the normal way—trying to keep it as steady as possible—and then, when the take is finished, you process it, which can take a few minutes. Once it's complete—voilà, the video actually looks as if it was shot on a tripod. It's that steady. I love this app.

Figure 4.5 Use the DollyCam app for extra stabilization.

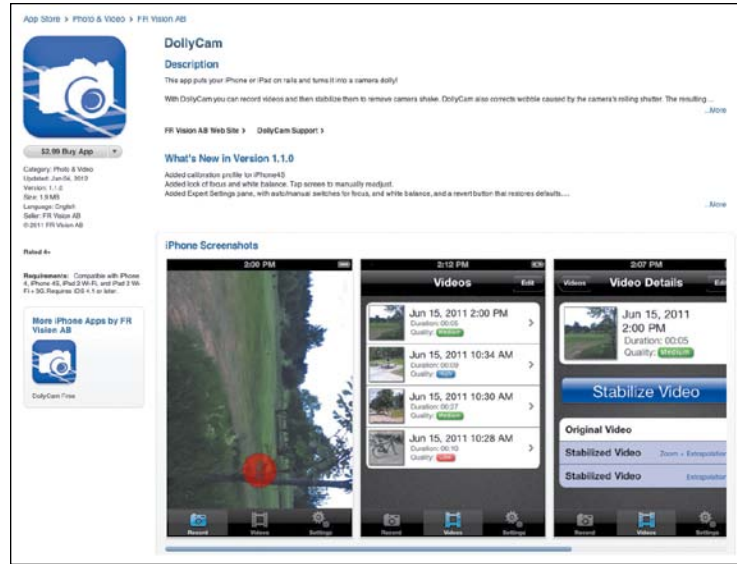
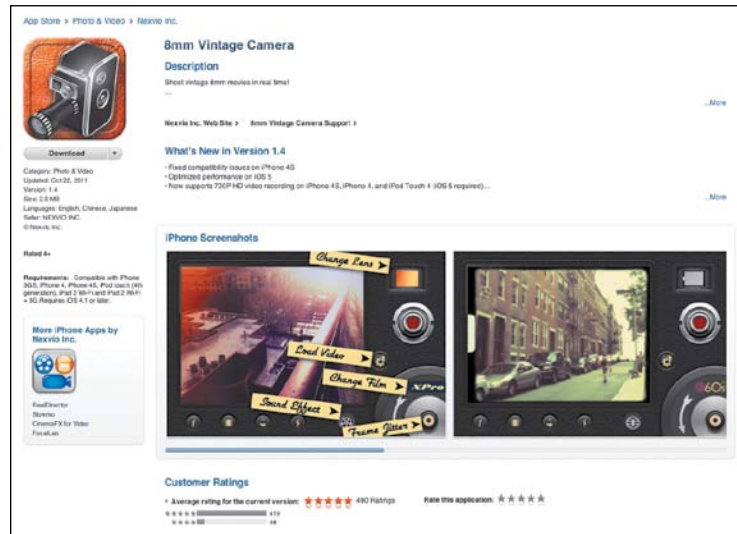


Figure 4.6 The 8mm Vintage Camera app is one of many that gives you an old film look to your videos.



8mm Vintage Camera

For just under \$2, you can add many arty and really cool looks to your videos, from rickety 1920s (like an old silent movie) to faded-color 1960s, saturated 1980s, and moody black-and-white noir (Figure 4.6). If you use the 8mm Vintage Camera app, be sure to go to Settings in the app and save your processed video in the Camera Roll section, so you'll be able to find it later.

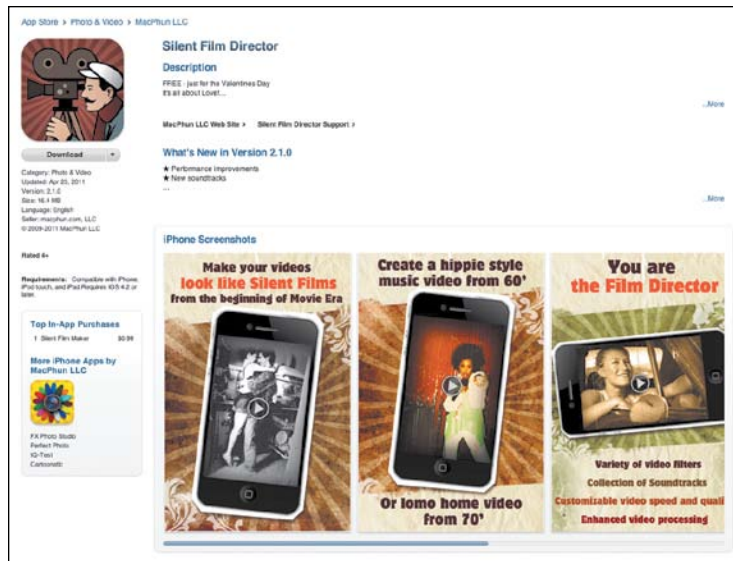


Figure 4.7 Silent Movie Director is another fun app for videomaking.

Silent Movie Director

Similar to 8mm Vintage Camera, this \$2 app turns your preexisting videos into vintage productions, with scratchy 1920s and 1930s looks, sepia, and faded color (Figure 4.7). If you're a fan of Hollywood's Golden Age, as I am, you'll love this app. A cute image of Charlie Chaplin pops up while you wait for your video to be transformed into something that resembles a relic of yesteryear. A cool speed control icon lets you make your footage really, really fast (think Keystone Kops) or slow. So if you're into these kinds of special effects, Silent Movie is probably the better choice for you than 8mm Vintage Camera. Once you get into the app, you're encouraged to buy more goodies, such as Silent Movie title cards and Silent Movie fonts.

Clapperboard

Big-time movies usually begin their productions with a clapperboard, which gives the sound engineers the sound they need to sync up the audio with the visuals. Should you want to mix iPhone footage with footage from another video source, or shoot one angle and mix it with another, one of these apps—and there are several in the iTunes App Store—will get you that slate and clapper sound. A basic clapperboard can be as inexpensive as \$.99. MoveSlate costs more at \$24.99 but it has a great interface and is an all-in-one digital slate, clapperboard, shot log, and notepad (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Use a clapperboard on the iPhone to sync up your audio.



iMovie

The iPhone app version of iMovie, Apple's popular video-editing software for computers, has been slimmed down to let you do basic edits on your iPhone and iPad footage. You can also add graphics, titles, and preprogrammed music.

The iMovie app is a must for “run and gun” footage—video that has been shot really quickly—and for doing a zippy edit with titles at the beginning and end, and the app can be used with the iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad. But be warned: Getting the hang of making precise edits with the app takes some getting used to—you have to pinch the clips with two fingers—and the cuts are nowhere near as smooth as with a mouse.

POINT-AND-SHOOT CAMERAS

One easy reason to explain the immense popularity of point-and-shoot cameras is their simplicity. The models that feature the best ease-of-use have minimal buttons or choices: All you need to do is turn them on, compose your image, and start shooting.



Figure 4.9 If you're using a point-and-shoot camera, get a hefty size memory card for video files, which are huge. I recommend a 16 GB card at the minimum.

Videomaking with point-and-shoot cameras has evolved over the years, from limited ten-second silent clips to low-resolution video with sound, to 720p HD, and now full 1080p HD on many of the top camera models from Canon, Nikon, Sony, and others (for my specific recommendations, see Chapter 3).

Taking videos is insanely simple and pretty uniform on point-and-shoot cameras. Look for either the red record button on the back of the camera and/or the movie camera icon on the mode dial. Either of those will get you going.

One tool you will definitely need is a big fat memory card. At top resolution, video files eat up a lot of memory. I recommend at minimum a 16 GB card (Figure 4.9), which will cost you about \$30 and give you at least an hour's worth of footage. It's not just more storage that the heftier card gives you—it also lets you shoot longer clips. When buying the card, make sure it's a high-speed card, Class 10 or higher, since you'll need the added oomph to keep up with video files.

The Kodak PlaySport cameras—which stopped production in 2012 but are still easily found in stores—have touch-screen controls, so don't go searching for the red record button, it's not there. Instead, just press play on the back of the camera to start recording. These cameras also have built-in tools to trim clips and share to sites such as YouTube and Facebook.

Unlike the iPhone, the PlaySport and Flip cameras are intended to be used in the vertical position, which won't affect your final video. Once the video is recorded, it will still display horizontally.

Figure 4.10 You'll want to learn how to check and adjust your focus on your DSLR for different effects.



DSLR CAMERAS

For cinema-like results, nothing beats shooting on a digital SLR. The size of the image sensor can be 20 times larger than what's found in a video camera, resulting in a brighter, crisper, and more HD-looking image. Put a beautiful fast lens on the camera at its maximum f-stop—like f/2.0 or f/2.8—and the background goes out of focus for a wonderful image with a dreamy quality (Figure 4.10).

However, making videos on DSLRs such as the Canon EOS Rebel line can be a frustrating experience for a beginner, even though the final result can look amazing if you held the camera steady with a tripod and have the hang of how to keep the Rebel T3i or older models in focus. The newest Rebel, the T4i, addresses focus issues, but earlier versions don't stay in focus once you start recording and move your position. It can be a challenge. Here's how to focus with the older Rebel T3i and other DSLRs like it:

- 1 For the Rebel T3i, start by clicking the movie button on the back of the camera by the red dot. This sets the 3-inch LCD viewfinder to "live view."
- 2 You'll be composing directly on the LCD, which can be tough if you're outside in bright sun. If this is an issue, pick up an LCD shade, which could be found at any camera shop.
- 3 I usually set the lens to manual focus (on the lens, switch from A to M) because it won't stay in focus automatically. On the Rebel T3i, you set focus by pointing-and-clicking the button on the far right, the one normally used for choosing where your focus dot will go in your composition. This button lets

you magnify the image—for image-composing purposes only—and will give you a much clearer focus check.

- 4 Once filming begins, be sure to be on your toes. The subject will go out of focus if he or she moves. To prevent this, try to use a medium f-stop setting like $f/5.6$ or $f/8$, which will give you more focus latitude. The image will look best at a wide opening such as $f/2.8$. This gives you a big, blurry background, but the amount of area in focus will be limited.

On several Sony and Nikon DSLRs, along with the Canon Rebel T4i, autofocus will stay in place when you start recording. However, finding the record button is different on these cameras. Sony has the best-marked red record button—it's even labeled *Movie*. For Nikon, there's a little lever next to the red button labeled *LV*, which stands for “Live View,” which indicates the ability to compose directly on the LCD instead of through the viewfinder.

A good tripod is a must while recording videos with DSLRs, whether it is a small camera such as the Rebel T4i or bigger cameras such as the Canon 60D and Canon 5D Mark II—the image will look way too shaky if you try handheld recording.

There are tons of accessories for DSLR cameras, but this one will probably help you more than any other: the Hoodman H-LLP3 HoodLoupe 3.0 Professional 3-inch screen loupe (Figure 4.11). Attach it to the LCD, and you'll not only be able to compose in direct sunlight, you'll also be able to fine-tune your focus because the loupe brings the image directly to your eye with 1-to-1 magnification. (Spend another \$20 for Hoodman's Cinema Strap and you won't have to hold the loupe over the LCD—it will lock in place.) Hoodman also sells a \$25 lens shade that goes directly over the LCD to block the sun.



To learn more about focusing your DSLR camera, watch the video at www.peachpit.com/videonation.



Figure 4.11 The HoodLoupe Pro is a great investment, especially if you are shooting outdoors.

VIDEO CAMERAS

I argued against the need for owning a full-service, legacy video camcorder for our purposes in the previous chapter, but if you already own one or are thinking of buying one, here are some usage tips.

When the Flip cameras were first introduced in 2007, Jonathan Kaplan, the chief executive of Flip-maker Pure Digital, declared that video was an opportunity because over the years, video cameras had become way too complicated with their plethora of buttons. So when Kaplan introduced the Flip, it had but a few: a red record button, a playback button, and fast forward/rewind button. That design was quite revolutionary.

In 2012, video cameras are a shadow of their former selves, and are relegated to the back of the store where they get little attention. But I'll say this for video cameras: They have become simpler to operate!

Take the Panasonic SDR-H100, for example (*Figure 4.12*). This \$200 video camera is not littered with buttons. Here's how to use it and most other similar camcorders:

- 1 Flip out the LCD preview screen to find the empty slot for your SD card. Slip it in.
- 2 Insert your external microphone into the (poorly identified) A/V slot for sound, which is next to the memory slot.
- 3 Compose your image on the LCD, and click the red button on the back of the camera to start recording.
- 4 Press the zoom button atop the camera to get closer to the action.
- 5 When you're done, click the preview button, also on top of the camera, to play it back. That's it.

Now that we've reviewed how to use your video gear and accessories, it's time to plan for your video production. So turn the page and let's dive in.



Figure 4.12
Video cameras such as this one are still perfectly fine for using in your web productions and are simpler to operate than previous versions.

INDEX

Numbers

- “60 minutes,” 11
- 8mm Vintage Camera app, 84–85
- 380p resolution, 51
- 480p resolution, 51
- 720p resolution, 51
- 1080p resolution, 51

A

- Action Life Media
 - connection cables, 74
 - Owle mCAMLITE, 72–73
- Adams, Paul, 221
- Adobe Premiere Elements, 75–76, 152–153
 - cutaway shot, 171
 - disadvantages, 169
 - editing in, 171–172
 - export options, 205
 - features, 170
 - Freeze Frame tool, 170
 - versus iMovie, 169
 - main window, 170
 - Move tool, 172
 - saving videos with, 204–205
 - Sceneline option, 170
 - Share tab, 172
 - sharing feature, 13
 - Split Clip tool, 170
 - “Talking Tech” series, 4
 - Timeline option, 170
 - Title tool, 170
 - video-editing software, 169–172
 - web uploads, 172
- Adobe Premiere Pro, 152
- Adorama website, 49
- AdSense program, joining, 211
- advertorials, 20–21
- Almost DSLR app, 83
- “American Idiot,” 110
- Angle Viewer, using, 198
- Annoying Orange, 20, 44–45, 146–147
- Ansell, Mike, 176–178
- Antebellum, Lady, 22
- Apple iMovie. *See* iMovie
- Apple iPad, *See* iPad.
- Apple iPhone. *See* iPhone.
- Apple headquarters, 6
- The Artist*, 111
- audience
 - building, 216
 - understanding, 221
- audio
 - checking in one-camera shoots, 139
 - preparing for, 102
- audio check
 - headphones, 114–115
 - performing, 114–115
- audio gear
 - lavalier microphones, 63–64
 - mic flags, 65
 - shotgun mics, 66
 - stick microphones, 64–65
- audio recorders
 - using, 66–67
 - Zoom H1, 67
 - Zoom H4N, 67

Audio-Technica ATR3350 lavalier mic, 64
AVCHD clips, warning about, 50

B

B&H website, 49
“Baby” parody, 36–38
backgrounds, replacing, 199–201
backing up files, 154
Baig, Ed, 4
banking business, making videos for, 31
Bennett, Cris, 96, 98–99, 132, 214
Bertinelli, Valerie, 8, 113
Bescor TH-770 High-Performance tripod, 69
Bieber, Justin, 35
Black Universal Bracket Adapter Mount, 72
Bloggie Live HD camcorder, 50–51
boardroom shots, avoiding, 110
Boedigheimer, Dane, *See also* Annoying Orange
44–45, 146
brainstorming. *See* ideas
Brin, Sergey, 215
B-roll
adding to editing workflow, 159–160
collecting on location, 129–130
defined, 11
preplanning, 100–101
taking for one-camera shoots, 141
using, 11
using in Facebook interview, 16–17
Brooks, Mel, 24
business videos
advertorials, 20
banking, 31
content to avoid, 29

dry cleaning, 31
effective approaches, 28
food, 31
home buyer videos, 30
garden store example, 27
ideas for, 31
photography software, 32–33
promoting, 27
sell subtly, 29
shooting, 131–132
small-business video, 27
speaking to customers, 28
taking video to the web, 28

C

camcorders. *See also* video cameras
point-and-shoot, 50–51
using, 90–91
camera bag, 77
camera mounts
monopods, 69
steadicams, 71
tiny tripods, 68
tripods, 68–69
camera positions, planning, 97
cameras. *See also* one-camera shoots;
three-camera shoots; two-camera shoots;
video cameras
Canon, 56–57
digital SLRs, 55–57
DSLR, 88–89
GoPro, 58
iPad, 54–55
iPhone, 54

cameras (*continued*)

- mirror-less compact, 52–53
- placing, 111
- positioning subjects, 112
- setting up, 196
- Sony, 57
- wearable, 58

Cameron, James, 146

Canon products

- 5D Mark III, 56–57, 77
- 5D Mark II, 77
- EOS 60D, 56–57
- EOS Rebel T3i camera, 77, 88
- EOS Rebel T4i camera, 56
- PowerShot 100 HS, 51–52
- Vixia HF R20 video camera, 50

card readers, using, 155

Carolla, Adam, 113

celebrity locations, 113

“Charlie Bit My Finger” video, 218

chroma key effect, 199–201

city manager interview, 138

clamp light, using, 59

Clapperboard app, 85

Clark, Wendy, 42

clients, speaking to, 28–29

clips

- assembling, 196–197
- syncing, 198

cloud storage, using, 154

Coca-Cola

- Facebook, 11
- interview, 11, 42

- online marketing story, 42
- website, 11

comedy videos, 20, 216–217

compression questions, getting answers to, 207–208

connection cables, 74

content marketing, Funderburg example, 32

“Cookie Break” vlogs, 134

corporate video, shooting, 110

“Curb Your Enthusiasm,” 104–105

customers, speaking to, 28–29

D

“Dancing with the Stars,” 107, 217

David, Larry, 104

Dawson, Shane, 20, 34–35

demo, for product, 21

dialogue, illustrating, 144

diffuser, Sto-Fen Omni-Bounce, 62

digital SLRs. *See* DSLR cameras

DollyCam app, 83–84

Dropbox, 13

dry cleaning business, making videos for, 31

DSLR cameras, 55–57, 88–89. *See also* cameras

- accessories, 89
- autofocus, 89
- Canon EOS Rebel T3i and T4i, 88–89
- composing on LCD, 88
- defined, 5
- focusing, 89
- HoodLoupe Pro, 89
- lens and f-stop, 88
- making videos on, 88

- screen loupe, 89
- tripod, 89
- using with iPhones, 128

DuJulio, James, 219

Dynex tripod, using, 69

E

editing hardware. *See also* multicamera editing;

- video editing

- adding B-roll, 159–160

- Apple iMac, 154

- card readers, 155

- external drives, 154

- hard drives, 154

- Hewlett-Packard p2-1110, 154

- HP Omni 220 Quad, 154

- Mac Mini, 154

- Mac recommendations, 154

- RAM, 154

- Windows recommendations, 154

editing programs

- Adobe Premiere Elements, 152–153

- Adobe Premiere Pro, 152

- entry-level, 152–153

- Final Cut Pro X, 152–153

- iMovie, 152

- Movie Maker, 152

editing with ease, 12

editing workflow

- creating scripts, 159

- importing footage, 159

- process, 158

- recording narration, 159

- viewing footage, 159

equipment checklist, making, 97

exporting videos. *See also* videos

- compression questions, 207–208

- file formats, 204

- final check, 209

- in Final Cut Pro X, 206

- finding files, 206–207

- saving in iMovie, 206

- saving with Premiere Elements, 204–205

- YouTube, 208

external drives, editing hardware, 154

Ezarik, Justine, 40

F

Facebook

- B-roll for interview, 16

- headquarters, 14–15

- interview, 14–17

- Like button, 16

- logo, 15

- page, 15–16

- posting videos on, 210, 221

- script for, 16

Fanny Wang headphones, 149

Farris, Margot, 129–130

file formats

- choosing for export, 204

- H.264, 204

- MP4, 204

- MPEG-4, 204

files, finding, 206–207

Filezilla, 13

Filmic Pro app, 82

Final Cut Pro, 75–76

- Final Cut Pro 7
 - overhaul of, 184
 - Render process, 184
- Final Cut Pro X. *See also* video-editing software
 - adding B-roll, 192
 - adding sound bites, 192
 - adding titles, 193–194
 - Angle Viewer, 198
 - Apply Crop, 185–186
 - Apply Transformation, 185–186
 - Auto Enhancements menu, 186–187
 - Blade tool, 185
 - buttons, 186
 - Camera Import, 185
 - Chroma Key effect, 199–201
 - cost of, 152–153
 - creating desktop folders, 187
 - creating events, 187–188
 - creating projects, 189
 - deleting audio tracks, 192
 - Detach Audio option, 192
 - editing, 190–194
 - editing quickly, 184–185
 - Event Browser, 185, 188
 - Event Library, 185, 188
 - exporting in, 206
 - illustrating narration, 191–192
 - Import from Camera, 186
 - importing footage, 189–190
 - inserting transitions, 193
 - Inspector, 185–186
 - interface, 185
 - Keyer for Chroma Key effect, 200
 - launching, 185
 - Lower Thirds title choices, 193
 - making cuts, 191–192
 - marker tool, 197–198
 - Multicam Clip feature, 197
 - multicamera editing, 196
 - Position tool, 186
 - recording audio, 190–191
 - recording narration, 190
 - rendering in, 184
 - reviewing videos, 195
 - selecting clips, 190
 - sharing videos, 195
 - Show Titles Browser button, 186–187
 - skimming, 190
 - starting projects, 190
 - stopping recording, 190
 - storyline in Timeline, 185
 - Timing Menu, 186–187
 - tips, 200
 - toolbar, 186
 - tools, 185
 - Transitions button, 186–187
 - Viewer, 185
 - video about, 187
 - writing narration, 190
- Five Ws of interviewing, 25, 147
- flash drives, capacities of, 48
- Flashpoint Three-Light Fluorescent Outfit, 61
- Flip cameras, using, 87, 90
- Flip Video camera, 50–51
- Flipboard interview, 128–129
- Flipboard iPad app, using, 128
- food blogging, 94
- food business, making videos for, 31

frame, rechecking, 145
Freddy Krueger sweater, 176
Fujiwara, Sean, 119–121
Funderburg, Andrew, 32–33
furniture business, making videos for, 34

G

gear
 guide, 47–77
 making equipment checklist, 97
gear list, 77
gear setup
 Boedigheimer example, 44
 Funderberg example, 32
Gibson, Patty, 129–130
Good Stuff Restaurant, 96, 98, 132, 167, 214
Google
 AdSense, 211
 dealing with, 180
 start of, 215
Google Hangout, interviewing in, 133
GoPro Hero HD 2 camera, 58
Graham, Jefferson, 4
Graham, Judy, 175–178, 190
Grande, Ariana, 218
Great Eats! video blog, 94, 214
green screen
 replacing in editing, 38
 using, 34–36, 199

H

H.264 file format, 17, 204
halogen lights, using, 62

hard drives
 transferring footage to, 12
 using, 154
Harvey, Steve, 42
HD (high-definition), 51
headphone jack, plugging into, 115
headphones, Fanny Wang, 149
Hendricks, Christina, 221
Hewlett-Packard p2-1110, 154
Home Depot
 construction light, 32
 clamp lights, 121
Hoodman H-LLP3 HoodLoop, 89
Hosseini, Reza, 112
“Hot in Cleveland,” 113
HP Omni 220 Quad, 154
Humboldt, Jerry, 138

I

ideas
 Boedigheimer example, 45
 brainstorming, 40
 for business, 31
 Coca-Cola online marketing story, 42
 coming up with, 33
 pitching, 39
 seeking out, 42–43
 self-publishing ebooks story, 42
 starting with, 8
 taking to web, 28
 trying, 43
 Westcott Spiderlites story, 43

- iJustine, 34–35, 37
 - idea-making process, 40
 - parodies, 20, 40–41
 - vlogs, 40–41
- iK Multimedia iRig Mic, 73–74, 102
- iMovie, 12, 75, 152
 - versus Adobe Premiere Elements, 169
 - iPad version, 173
 - saving files in, 206
- iMovie app, 86
 - cost of, 173–174
 - editing with, 173–174
 - sharing videos, 174
 - Theme, 174
 - titles, 174
 - transitions, 174
 - trimming, 174
- iMovie for Mac, 162–168
 - adding titles, 166–167
 - creating events, 163
 - creating projects, 164
 - cutaways, 165
 - editing in, 162–165
 - editing text, 167
 - fast-forwarding clips, 164
 - importing video files, 163
 - limitations, 168
 - naming events, 163
 - picking sections, 164
 - Project Library, 165
 - sharing video, 168
 - transition, 168
- Instagram, 159
- interview questions
 - basing on responses, 147
 - framing, 147
 - listening to answers, 147
 - writing out, 103–104
- interviewing
 - and collecting B-roll, 129–130
 - in Google Hangout, 133
 - intelligently, 10
 - multiple people, 130
- interviews. *See also* one-camera shoots; three-camera shoots; two-camera shoots
 - Boedigheimer, Dane, 44–45, 146
 - booking, 25
 - ending, 147
 - Five Ws of, 25147
 - Funderburg, Andrew, 32–33
 - illustrating dialogue, 144
 - Jillette, Penn, 148–149
 - “Knitter to the Stars,” 176
 - Penna, Joe, 116–117
 - posing questions, 25–26
 - producing, 24–27
 - remote, 132–133
 - talking heads, 143
 - Trevino, Valentina, 134–135
 - Xiong, Boua, 126–127
- iPad. *See also* iPhone apps
 - camera, 54–55
 - editing video on, 173–174
 - iMovie version, 173
 - microphones, 73–74
 - shooting with, 81–82

iPad apps, Flipboard, 128

iPhone

- adjusting exposure, 82
- Airplane mode, 80, 102
- back-facing mode, 139
- camera shooting modes, 138
- cameras, 54
- connecting microphone to, 81
- editing video on, 173–174
- front-facing mode, 139
- microphones, 73–74
- Record button, 81
- shooting in horizontal position, 81, 138
- shooting with, 80–81, 128–129
- stabilizing, 8, 72, 83–84
- using with digital SLR, 128

iPhone 4S, advantage of, 80

iPhone apps. *See also* iPad

- 8mm Vintage Camera, 84–85
- Almost DSLR, 83
- Clapperboard, 85
- DollyCam, 83–84
- Filmic Pro, 82
- iMovie, 86
- Silent Movie Director, 85

iPod Touch

- editing video on, 173–174
- microphone, 73–74

I-Prompt Pro teleprompter, 23, 36

iRig Mic, features of, 73–74, 102

J

Jillette, Penn, 148–149

Joby GP3 Gorillapod tripod, 68, 100

Johnson, Ray William, 216–217

Jordan, Larry, 152

“Judy Video Nation” project, creating, 188–189

K

Kaminsky, Ed, 30

Kaplan, Jonathan, 90

Kelby, Scott, 21, 120

Kermit the Frog interview, 157

keywords

- creating, 215
- using, 214

“Knitter to the Stars,” 176

“Knitting Tips by Judy,” 175–177

- camera placement, 179
- editing process, 179–180
- gear, 177
- lighting, 178
- production values, 177
- promotion, 180–181
- shooting, 178
- start of, 176
- trimming, 179
- uploading videos, 180
- vlog process, 181

Knittingtipswithjudy, 190

Kodak products

- PlaySport cameras, 87
- PlayTouch cameras, 50

Korhan, Jeff, 218

- L**
- lavalier microphones
 - Audio-Technica ATR3350, 64
 - Sennheiser kit, 64
 - Sony UWP-V1/3032, 64
 - using, 63–64, 102, 115
 - wired and wireless, 64
 - LED lights, using, 125
 - lenses, Olloclip add-on, 74
 - LeVee, Julia, 114
 - light stand, using, 60
 - lighting
 - “butterfly” pattern, 121
 - LED, 125
 - “loop” pattern, 121
 - Lowel Pro-lights, 124
 - one-light setups, 121–123
 - outdoor, 118–119
 - pro-light setup, 124
 - Rembrandt look, 121
 - softboxes, 124–125
 - two-light setups, 121–123
 - window, 120
 - lighting equipment
 - clamp light, 59
 - Flashpoint Three-Light Fluorescent Outfit, 61
 - halogen lights, 62
 - Lightpanels MicroPen LED, 63
 - Lowel Pro-light, 62
 - on-camera light, 62–63
 - parchment paper, 59
 - Rifa eXchange 44 softbox, 125
 - Sony HVL-20DW2K2 Video Light, 62
 - Sto-Fen Omni-Bounce diffuser, 62
 - uLite Two-Light Umbrella Kit, 60
 - umbrellas, 124
 - lighting subjects, 98–99
 - Lightpanels MicroPen LED light, 63
 - lights, setting up, 111
 - links, using, 215–216
 - location
 - getting started on, 110
 - picking, 9, 106
 - Lowel Pro-lights, using, 62, 124
- M**
- Mac Mini, cost of, 154
 - “Mad Men,” 221
 - makeup, applying, 132
 - Manfrotto products
 - 055XDB Tripod Outfit, 68
 - 561BHDV-1 Fluid Video Monopod, 70
 - 680B monopod, 69
 - Mann, Jonathan, 35
 - markers, adding in Final Cut Pro, 197–198
 - mastering watchability, 11
 - Matthews, Chris, 146–147
 - McClinton, Gabrielle, 110
 - McCue, Mike, 128–129
 - McLoughlin Figel, Linda, 129–130
 - “Meet the Vlogger” video, 190, 195
 - memory cards, 12

- mic flags, using, 65
- microphones
 - IK Multimedia iRig Mic, 73–74, 102
 - iPad, 73–74
 - iPhone, 73–74
 - iPod Touch, 73–74
 - lavalier, 63–64, 102, 115
 - mounting with XLR input, 74
 - price range, 102
 - shotgun, 66
 - stick, 64–65
- mirror-less compact cameras, 52–53
- monopods
 - Manfrotto 561BHDV-1 Fluid Video, 69
 - Manfrotto 680B, 69
 - using, 10
- Movie Maker, 12, 152, 161–162
- MP3 format, 37
- MP4 format, using, 204
- MPEG-4 format, using, 204
- multicam clips, creating, 197
- multicamera editing. *See also* editing hardware
 - Angle Viewer, 198
 - assembling clips, 196–197
 - camera setup, 196
 - sound enhancements, 199
- multicamera shoots, 112
- music, adding to productions, 36–37
- Mystery Guitar Man, 116–117

N

- narration
 - illustrating, 159
 - recording, 159, 190
 - writing, 190
- Nightmare on Elm Street*, 176

O

- Oloclip add-on lens, features of, 74
- Olympus Pen PL1 camera, 32, 52–53
- on-camera light, using, 62–63
- one-camera shoots, 112–113. *See also* cameras;
interviews
 - accommodating limitations, 141
 - advice about, 141
 - B-roll, 141
 - checking lighting, 138
 - checking sound, 139
 - framing subject, 139–140
 - positioning camera, 138–139
 - starting shooting, 140
- one-light setups, 121–124
- online video, viewing, 209–210
- outdoor light, using, 118–119

P

- Page, Larry, 215
- (pages) bookstore, 129–130
- Panasonic products
 - GH2 camera, 52
 - SDR-H100 camera, 90
- parchment paper, using, 59

- parodies, 20
 - Annoying Orange, 20
 - “Baby,” 36
 - creating, 35–38
 - editing, 38
 - iJustine, 20
 - improvising, 38
 - producing, 34–38
 - Shane Dawson, 20
 - step-by-step, 35
 - Penn & Teller magic duo, 148–149
 - Penna, Joe, 116–117
 - perfecting postproduction, 12
 - photography software business, 32–33
 - PhotoJojo DSLR Mount, 72–73
 - planning. *See also* preplanning
 - importance of, 104–106
 - shoot, 9
 - PlayTouch cameras, 50
 - point-and-shoot
 - camcorders, 50–51
 - still cameras, 51–52
 - point-and-shoot cameras, 86–87. *See also* video cameras
 - Flip, 87
 - Kodak PlaySport, 87
 - memory cards, 87
 - postproduction, 12, 33
 - PowerShot 100 HS, 51–52
 - preplanning, 94. *See also* planning
 - arriving early, 95–96
 - B-roll, 100–101
 - camera positions, 97
 - equipment checklist, 97
 - interview questions, 103–104
 - placement of subject, 98–100
 - shooting arrangements, 95
 - sound, 102
 - stand-up shots, 100
 - visualizing setup, 96
 - preproduction planning. *See* preplanning
 - product demos, 21
 - production errors, avoiding, 107
 - production examples
 - business videos, 131–132
 - collecting B-roll, 129–130
 - (pages) bookstore, 129–130
 - remote interviews, 132–133
 - shooting with iPhone, 128–129
 - pro-light setup, 124
 - promotion
 - making it viral, 218–219
 - subscriptions, 216–217
 - views, 217
 - Pure Digital Technologies, 50
- Q**
- questions. *See* interview questions
- R**
- RAM requirements, considering, 154
 - real estate customers, talking to, 30
 - Redrock Micro, 213
 - Reiner, Carl, 24

- remote interviews, 132–133
 - capture software, 133
 - connection, 133
 - importing video, 133
 - recording, 133
- resolution
 - 380p, 51
 - 480p, 51
 - 720p, 51
 - 1080p, 51
 - considering, 51
- restaurant blogging, 94
- Rifa eXchange 44 softbox, 125
- Rode VideoMic Pro VMP mic, 66
- “Rolling in the Deep,” 218

S

- Samsung products
 - NX cameras, 52
 - NX-200 camera, 52–53
- screen loupe, using, 89
- Screenflow, 33
- script, creating, 16, 159
- self-publishing ebooks story, 42
- Sennheiser lavalier kit, 64
- setup, visualizing, 96
- shade, shooting with, 119
- sharing video, 13
- shooting
 - with one camera, 138–141
 - outside, 112
 - planning, 9
 - preparing for, 94
 - with savvy, 10
 - solo, 6
 - with three cameras, 143–144
 - with two cameras, 141–143
- shoots
 - avoiding embarrassment, 145
 - keeping things moving, 146
 - planning, 9
 - staying on topic, 146–147
- shotgun mics
 - Rode VideoMic Pro VMP, 66
 - using, 66
- Silent Movie Director app, 85
- Skype interviews, conducting, 132–133
- SLR cameras. *See* DSLR cameras
- Smooove, J.B., 104–105
- Smugmug website, 210
- snipe, 17
- softboxes, using, 124–125
- software. *See* video-editing software
- Sony products
 - Bloggie Live HD camcorder, 50–51
 - HDR-CX 190 video camera, 50
 - HVL-20DW2K2 Video Light, 62
 - NEX line cameras, 52
 - UWP-V1 wireless lavalier mic, 64
 - UWP-V1/3032 lavalier mic, 64
 - Vegas Movie Studio software, 12, 76
- social media, *See also* Facebook, Twitter, 26
- sound. *See also* audio check
 - checking in one-camera shoots, 139
 - preparing for, 102

stabilizers

- Action Life Media Owle mCAMLITE, 72–73
- Black Universal Bracket Adapter Mount, 72
- PhotoJojo DSLR Mount, 72–73
- Steadicam Smoothee, 72
- Studio Neat, 72
 - using with iPhones, 72
- stand-up shots, doing, 6, 100
- start with idea, 8
- steadicams, using, 71
- stick microphones, using, 64–65
- Sto-Fen Omni-Bounce diffuser, 62
- Studio Neat stabilizers, 72
- styles of web videos. *See* web videos
- subject
 - framing in one-camera shoots, 139–140
 - framing in two-camera shoots, 141–142
 - placement of, 98–100, 112
 - selecting setting for, 110
 - zooming in on, 112
- subscriptions, using, 216–217
- success tracking, 13
- Swift, Taylor, 22
- Syrko, Heather, 122–123
- System, Kevin, 159–160

T

- tags, creating, 215
- “Talking Tech” series, 4–5, 39, 42–43
 - Apple products, 5–6
 - beginnings, 4
 - Coca-Cola story, 42
 - developing ideas for, 42–43
 - Facebook interview, 13–17
 - producing, 39
 - real-life scenario, 13–17
 - self-publishing ebooks, 42
 - url, 4
 - Westcott Spiderlites story, 43
- “Talking Your Tech” series, 5
 - Bertinelli, Valerie, 8
 - B-roll, 16–17
 - producing, 13–17
 - script preparation, 16
- Targus TG-42TT tabletop tripod, 68
- “The Tonight Show,” 24
- three-camera shoots. *See also* cameras;
interviews
 - framing and positioning, 143
 - interesting angles, 143
- Tiffany Dry Cleaners, 112
- titles
 - creating for videos, 212–213
 - importance of, 214
- Toasty Melts grilled cheese truck, 110
- “Today” show, 24
- tracking success, 13
- Trevino, Valentina, 134–135
- tripods
 - Bescor TH-770 High-Performance, 69
 - Dynex, 69
 - Joby GP3 Gorillapod, 68, 100
 - Manfrotto 055XDB Tripod Outfit, 68
 - price range, 69
 - Targus TG-42TT, 68
 - using, 68

Tubetape.com, 36
tutorials, 23
TV news, one-camera shoots, 112
Tweet, character maximum, 222
Twitter, posting videos on, 222
TwitVid website, 222
two-camera shoots. *See also* cameras; interviews
 framing subject and self, 141–142
 setting up, 142
 starting shooting, 142–143
two-light setups, 121–124
Tyson, Mike, 24

U

Uggie interview, 111
uLite Two-Light Umbrella Kit, 60
umbrellas, using, 59, 124
USA TODAY. *See also* “Talking Tech”
 flag, 65
 watermark, 16

V

“Val’s Art Diary,” 134–135, 212–213
“Victorious” Nickelodeon TV show, 218
video blog, 22
video cameras. *See also* camcorders; cameras;
 point-and-shoot cameras
 advantage, 49
 Canon Vixia HF R20, 50
 considering, 49
 entry-level, 50
 Flip, 50–51, 90

LCD screen, 49
Panasonic SDR-H100, 90
Sony HDR-CX 190, 50
tape-based, 48
using, 90–91
video chat, quality of, 132
video editing, 155–157. *See also* editing hardware;
 Final Cut Pro X
video logs (vlogs), 22
video pieces, length of, 157
video workflow.
 B-roll, 11
 editing with ease, 12
 elements of, 7–13
 go with gear, 8
 interviewing intelligently, 10
 mastering watchability, 11
 perfecting postproduction, 12
 planning shoot, 9
 sharing video, 13
 shooting with savvy, 10
 start with idea, 8
 tracking success, 13
video-editing software, 75–76. *See also* Final Cut
 Pro X
 Adobe Premiere Elements, 75–76, 169–172
 Final Cut Pro, 75–76
 iMovie app, 173–174
 iMovie, 75, 162–168
 Sony Vegas Movie Studio, 76
 Windows Movie Maker, 75, 161–162

videos. *See also* exporting videos; web videos
advice about, 33, 44
creating titles for, 212
describing, 216
posting on web, 25–26
sharing, 13
tagging, 215
uploading to web, 209–216
viewing online, 209–210
view, obtaining, 13
views, using Angle Viewer for multicam, 198
Vimeo website
consulting, 207–208
posting video on, 210
viral videos, making, 218–219
vlog, 22
vlog process, 181

W

wearable cameras, 58
Weather Channel, 42
web, uploading videos to, 209–216
web videos. *See also* videos
advertorial, 20
comedy, 20
elements of, 7
interview, 23
parody, 20
product demo, 21
tutorial, 23
video log (vlog), 22
webisode, 22–23

webisodes, 22–23
Weir, Bill, 146
Westcott Spiderlites story, 43
Westcott uLite Two-Light Umbrella Kit, 60
What?, asking in interviews, 147
When?, asking in interviews, 147
Where?, asking in interviews, 147
White, Emily, 15–16
White, Terry, 23
white balance, setting, 60
Who?, asking in interviews, 147
Why?, asking in interviews, 147
wide shot, 24
Wilkinson, Laurie, 180–181
window light, using, 120
Windows Movie Maker software, 75
wireless lavalier mic and receiver
Facebook shoot, 15
words, importance of, 214–215
workflow. *See* video workflow

X

Xiong, Boua, 126–127
XLR input, mounting microphone with, 74

Y

Yankovic, Weird Al, 20
YouTube channel
comments, 220
creating avatar, 219–221
embedding links, 220
Like button, 220
tweaking, 219–221

YouTube Partner program, joining, 211

YouTube videos

categories, 213–214

compression tips, 208

creating channels, 211

Dawson, Shane, 34–35

iJustine, 34–35, 37, 40–41

“Knitting Tips by Judy,” 175–181

playing back, 208

sharing, 210

uploading, 211

views, 217

Z

Zoom products

H1 audio recorder, 67

H4N digital recorder, 67