

# Embracing technology is key to unlocking the video world

**T**here are so many video companies now in Cambridge and that's great because the demand for video has exploded.

We started out what seems like 100 years ago, making 35mm slides with a rostrum camera and tweezers. Back then only a firm's MD would have slides – probably a new set each year with each slide costing approximately £50. That was 1996. PowerPoint dealt a swift blow to the slide industry, so we moved into PowerPoint design, which led onto interactive CD-ROMs and the birth on the phrase 'multimedia'. This new phrase needed feeding so we started to produce affordable animation and video content.

I guess where this is all heading is that we've always looked to the future, especially as most of the things we used to do don't even exist now. CD-ROMs are now mostly used as drinks coasters in Shoreditch or bird scarers in my mum's garden.

The filming side of what we do has been incredibly successful and we're genuinely humbled by the awards and client testimonials. We've now filmed in more than 40 countries and in many challenging locations such as Madagascar, Malawi and Lincolnshire.

We're incredibly versatile, providing two-man crews for smaller shoots with the capacity to scale up to full film production including scriptwriters, autocue and green screen.

Animation complements our video service and since our first spinning logo for Microsoft for the launch of Windows 2000 (which lasted 5 seconds and took two weeks to render) we've moved on to create photorealistic fly-throughs for many local and national companies.

Animations help clarify and focus difficult concepts in a simple, easy to understand way. A great 40-second animation will transform pages of dull, lifeless text into a vibrant attention grabbing video.

We film a lot of events, award ceremonies and meetings and around 2012 our clients started asking if we could stream these events for those unable to attend, in remote locations or with crazy schedules. We initially resisted because webcasting had such a poor reputation as never quite working. Clients kept asking, so we built our own platform.

Our goal was to offer our clients a full service webcasting experience including filming the event, vision mixing and broadcasting live. The problem was that developers wanted



Jamie Huckle  
Picture: Keith Heppell

WaveFX has filmed around the globe, providing bespoke work for clients, livestreaming royal visits and even getting involved with Captain America. Creative director JAMIE HUCKLE explains.

your first born son and the deeds to your house to create a hosting platform. Set up in response to the crazy quotes received from other webcasting companies, we spent nearly two years developing our own technology.

Our microsites have been 100 per cent designed and created in-house and we're very proud of their success – they've taken almost a year to complete and have been built purely on our clients' needs and feedback.

Our microsites are secure and fully customisable to match any corporate branding and we include many interactive features for free, for example ask a question, voting and video on demand.

At present more than 150 sites have been created and we're always working on extra features.

We've made the platform as

adaptable as possible so all the features can be turned on/off as required. As well as that the sites allow for private streaming via password access, embedding into any other website and ticketing for pay to view events. You can see a demo at <http://yourname.webcastlive.co.uk>.

Webcasting has now become over 50 per cent of our business and we have three mobile teams that stream anything from Disney press junkets on Facebook, TEDx on YouTube and private meetings via our secure streaming platform.

Highlights so far include streaming HM The Queen launching an aircraft carrier, webcasting Professor Brian Cox's *Big Bang Live* and broadcasting the cast of *Captain America* on Facebook Live to more than 1 million viewers.

Our mobile streaming solution means we travel a lot – unbelievably it's more cost effective for clients in New York, San Francisco and Sydney to fly us out rather than use a local crew.

So for us we'll continue embracing new technology (I think my tumble dryer is 4K ready) – so much so that we launched a new company in 2014 dedicated to webcasting called eventstreaming.tv which just won Best UK webcasting company 2016, which is nice.

One tip if you're starting your own business, which has been covered in many books: it's an all-encompassing 24-hour lifestyle. Find time to turn off (or divert) the phone, take the wife out (Hole in the Wall, Wilbraham) and watch *Danger Mouse* with the kids (new and original series).

## Focus



Jamie Huckle

## Five lessons in presenting

### ■ Content is king

Keep the viewer in mind – dull presentations are unforgivable. If the viewer isn't engaged, they'll simply switch off. Put yourself in their position and ask why this audience would be interested, and what you can do to make the whole experience more interactive and relevant?

### ■ Production

You're putting your company name, brand and credibility out there for all to see and scrutinise so make it as professional as possible. Use at least two cameras (one wide the other close), light the room well, and use professional sound equipment (people forgive poor video but never poor sound). Using the latest phone might seem like a good idea, but it rarely is.

### ■ Rehearse

Rehearse and rehearse again. Make sure you have a clear introduction and call to arms to finish.

### ■ Engagement

Keeping your virtual audience engaged is crucial. It's hard to walk out in the middle of the CEO's keynote speech, but very easy to walk away from a screen. Include interactive features. Allow the viewer a voice with Q&A sessions, chatrooms, voting and polls. (We do all this by the way – just saying.)

### ■ Promotion

Viewing figures will be low if you don't promote your webcast. Create a targeted awareness campaign around your live stream and put it into action well in advance. Keep people updated as to when the webcast is going live and remember that it is always advisable to stream at multiple bit rates so viewers can watch on any device anywhere.

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