Lights, Camera, Action! (Parts 1 and 2)

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Peter H. Berge is the Web Education Director for Minnesota CLE. He graduated from William Mitchell College of Law with honors where he was an Editor of the Law Review. After law school, Mr. Berge clerked for the Minnesota Supreme Court and then moved to a civil litigation practice in Minneapolis. After publishing a book on Insurance Law, he lived the gypsy life of an itinerant law professor, teaching at the William Mitchell College of Law, Temple University School of Law and Georgetown University Law Center. Returning to Minnesota, he became the Vice President of Risk Management for Minnesota Lawyers Mutual until an insane urge to try cases again struck him. A timely intervention by Frank Harris brought Mr. Berge back to his senses and into the fold of Minnesota CLE. When not shepherding the Minnesota CLE Webcasting endeavor, Mr. Berge plays guitar and sings in bars around the Twin Cities with The Midnight Mo Experience and you can see some of his photography at [www.peterberge.com](http://www.peterberge.com) and [www.facesofmn.com](http://www.facesofmn.com). He recently had a show of his photography in Stillwater, Minnesota called "China - It’s All Over the Map." Peter is a director on the ACLEA Executive Committee.

Marliss Weber  
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Marliss Weber, MA, is an award-winning writer/producer based in Edmonton, Alberta. She has produced more than 250 local, regional and national television commercials, three television news/current events series and numerous corporate videos. As a writer, she has been published across the globe in more than 40 publications. Her company, Parados Communications Inc. focuses on corporate storytelling, using visual media, web, and social media to communicate her clients' messages in a creative way. She is particularly proud of her zombie-themed recruitment video for the municipality Strathcona County, her place-branding campaigns for the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton, as well as her many projects with the Legal Education Society of Alberta. Her website is [www.parodos.ca](http://www.parodos.ca) and you can follow her on Twitter at @Marlissw.

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RJ Jewell is the video producer for Bloomberg BNA where he produces marketing commercials, interviews for their resource centers and their internal communications videos. Prior to joining Bloomberg BNA, he worked for a trade association in Washington D.C. developing their website and producing all their communications videos. RJ received a B.F.A. with a concentration in video production from West Virginia University.
Lights, Camera, Action... Or, How to Video Blog

With the advent of smart phones that shoot video in high definition, simple video production and video blogging couldn’t be easier. We recommend using a smart phone with a small tripod, to maintain a steady shot. Most digital SLR cameras also shoot in HD, which can make for an excellent product.

There is a significant difference between a professional video shoot and a video blog. Video blogs are intended to be raw and “shoot from the hip,” therefore you have a lot of freedom and flexibility when it comes to how you shoot and light your subject. In general, free yourself of the technical demands of video shooting by using automated settings. You’re not going to get a slick, Hollywood result, but that’s really ok. Video blogging is meant to be authentic and real, in a documentary-type style.

That said, here are some tips to capture the best possible product, given the limitations of the “quick and dirty” medium:

- Frame your subject to the side, providing “talk space.” This is where the imaginary thought bubble would appear if the shot were to be in a comic-style storyboard. Watch news or documentary interviews to get a sense of this idea.
- Frame your subject with different focal lengths to give options for cutting. This means to shoot a close, medium and wide angle for each interview – sometimes it’s a good idea to shoot a close and a medium on the same question, so you have the ability to cut back and forth, depending on consistency of answer.
- Always be careful of what is in the subject’s background. Whenever possible, add a little flair or character when choosing a background for your subject.
- Even though you don’t have a lot of control when it comes to lighting (unless you’re going to bring in a professional kit – which is NOT necessary for a video blog) try to keep basic lighting principles in mind. For instance, you always want to have some kind of “key” lighting source, as well as a “fill”
lighting source. Key light is a bright light that allows you to see your subject clearly. Fill light is softer and more subtle, and evens out shadows (or if you’re feeling creative, creates interesting shadows and effects). Noting where your key light and fill light is coming from will give you some insights as to the best positioning for your subject. Try to avoid extremely directional light (ie. light coming from immediately above or below your subject) as it is generally unattractive light.

• Shoot your subject so they are eye-level with the camera. In an ideal world, the most attractive angle is a three-quarter profile, shot from a slight downward angle.

• It’s entirely up to you as to whether you choose to shoot your subject looking straight into the camera, or at an angle, looking at an interviewer. Most commonly, video blogs are intended to have a “first-person” effect.

• You can edit your video blog using mobile editing software. We recommend iMovie or Pinnacle Studio.

• Add music to complete your video. You can purchase royalty-free tracks from iTunes or other web-music providers.

Videos are a great way to complement different learning and retention styles. As video makes use of sight, sound and motion, you’re more likely to elicit an emotional response in your audience than you are with text. And that emotion and personal connection is what will make your message stand out – and be remembered – by your audience.

And since you’re creating your videos on a mobile platform, be sure to share them on social media – it’s a great way to build your following, show your expertise, and connect your face to your name.

If you need any further assistance with your video production or if you have technical questions, don’t hesitate to contact me at Marliss@parodos.ca. Happy shooting!