

Adding Video to Your Website Can Be Quick, Easy, Inexpensive

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In our profession, we're constantly looking for ways to improve, enhance and add content to our websites. And if you're not looking for ways to do this ... you should be!

A recent article from newswise.com (which was also featured on the CoSIDA website) studied data over a two-year period. It found that over the first quarter in both 2009 and 2010 that articles with video had an average 24 percent increase in readership.

So we've established that video is a great way to increase readership and interest.

But even now I can hear the protestations and excuses from the business office or even from the athletic communicator who is sometimes reluctant to try new things. In fact, I've heard many of these myself:

- "But we can't afford a video camera, a new computer and a video editing suite."
- "But I don't have the time."
- "But I don't know anything about video editing."
- "But I don't know how to embed video on my site."

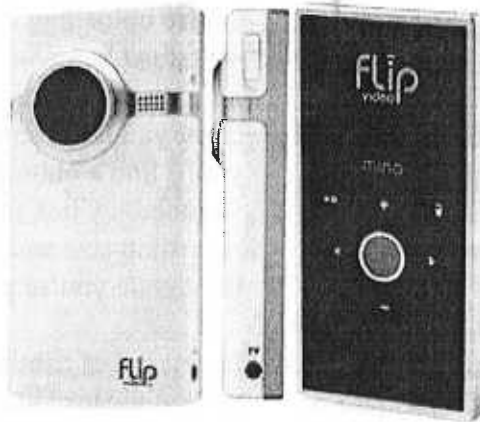
Allow me to answer these arguments one-by-one. I believe I can convince you that adding video to your athletic department's website is not only a good idea, it is a necessity.

1) Cost issues

It doesn't take a top-of-the line video camera to add video to shoot quality video. At the University of Minnesota, we purchased a handful of Flip Video cameras. We purchased the mino HD with one hour of built-in storage. These are currently listed for \$199.99 at www.theflip.com.

However, the Flip isn't your only option. Kodak, Samsung and other companies all make excellent products and all are relatively inexpensive. In fact, for those of you who work with sports involving water, the Kodak Playsport can even go 10 feet under water and continue to work properly.

**Despite the fact that there are numerous camera options out there in the marketplace, we're going to limit our discussion to the Flip Video from here on out. It's what I use and what I know.



The Flip also comes with its own software -- called FlipShare -- preloaded on the camera. You don't have to purchase any editing software to get started making your own videos. The FlipShare software is admittedly a bit low-end when it comes to video editing.

But it will give you nice fades between clips, the ability to utilize titles and credits and even has some pre-loaded background music.

If you want a low-/no-cost option with a few more bells and whistles, most PCs come pre-loaded with Windows Movie Maker. I've used it to create videos that give me more options in regard to transitions, titles, credits, headers, graphics, etc. Macs come with iMovie preloaded as well. But for most of us, at least to get started, FlipShare is more than enough.

With the Flip's built-in, switchblade-like USB connection (hence the name Flip), you just plug the camera into your computer, download the software and you're ready to go.

2) Time

You will need to invest a bit of time in creating video to add to your website. But it isn't nearly as much as you think. The video you shoot will be mostly from games, press conferences, media availabilities, etc. where you will be in attendance anyway.

We'll talk about how the editing software works later, but suffice to say it is extremely quick and easy.

There is a bit of time involved in the processing of video and uploading it to YouTube, Facebook, etc. -- which we'll cover later. But if you organize your tasks properly, you can do all your writing, get the article ready to be published to your website, etc. while these tasks are taking place.

3) Video editing

One of the most beautiful things about The Flip camera, is the pre-loaded software (FlipShare) that comes with it.

After shooting a video, you simply plug your Flip into a USB port on your computer. If it is the first time you've plugged it in, the FlipShare software will download from the camera to your computer. From that point on, any time you plug your Flip into your computer, FlipShare will start up automatically.

Once in FlipShare, every video on your camera will be displayed. There is a small scissors icon underneath the thumbnail of each of the videos. Click on this pair of scissors to clip or trim your videos any way you want them. Once you've trimmed your raw footage and saved those files to the Clips folder, you're ready to make a movie.

Making a movie with FlipShare is ridiculously simple. You simply drag and drop the clips into the movie pane on FlipShare in the order you want them to appear. Then, you have the option to add titles and credits at the beginning and end of the movie. Next, you're offered the option of adding music, which can either be some of FlipShare's stock music or music you already have on your computer like a school fight song. Just make sure you have the proper license/permission when you're using music. Now give the movie a title and save it. You've just created a movie with FlipShare.

4) Embedding On a Website

Many of us use a content management system to update our website. There are very few of us (if any) who still utilize a great deal of html code to make updates to our websites.

So, how do we make this video we've created show up on our website? FlipShare has another wonderful built-in feature. It allows you, with just a couple mouse clicks to automatically upload your video to YouTube, Facebook, MySpace and other social networking applications.

Even if you don't take advantage of FlipShare's ability to load video directly to these sites, it is quick and easy to do so through YouTube, Facebook and these other applications.

At Minnesota, we've used both YouTube and Facebook to upload our videos. Both have their pro's and con's ... But for consistency's sake, let's just say you're uploading to YouTube, although the process described below is similar for all the sharing sites.

Once you have uploaded your video to YouTube, you'll find a button underneath the video that says <Embed>. Click this button, choose a few preferences regarding size and look of the player and then copy the html code you're given.

One word of caution, however. Turn off the "Include related videos" button on YouTube. I'm not sure how they were "related" but the first video I ever posted, which was an interview with a men's gymnast, brought up related videos of a bikini contest that ended up with very few bikinis being involved. Trust me, you don't want that showing up on your website. After posting that first video, I quickly found this button and turned it off.

Now ... paste the above-mentioned html code into your content management system and you now have video on your website.

The presentation on your site will look more professional. Your fans will have more content available to them on your website. Your coaches will love that recruits will be able to watch the videos you're producing.

For more information, questions or comments regarding this Table Topic, please feel free to contact me:

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