

CIDOT User-Generated Video Guide & Tips



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Top Tips for Pre-Recorded Videos



Hi-Def Videos

All videos must be filmed in Hi-Def (720p or higher)



Landscape Mode

Videos must be filmed in landscape mode unless expressed otherwise by the CIDOT lead.



Backgrounds must be curated

Backgrounds must be cleaned and staged. Spend the time to ensure there are no distractions or questionable scenery. If you are unable to film in a backdrop that captures the natural beauty of the Cayman Islands, then ensure you add elements where possible to infuse the destination.



Filming matters

Incorporation of close-up shots are important to capture the audience attention. For stage videos (and live), please ensure you have shots that bring to focus the main elements of the video (Drinks, food etc).



Audio is vital

Clean, crisp audio is important. Ensure you test the quality of your audio.



Personal Appearance matters

Please ensure that you take the time to adjust hair, makeup and wardrobe to create the most professional appearance.

Guidance for Live Videos



Connectivity

To ensure a smooth feed, please test your connection prior. Ensure your WiFi connectivity is stable in the area that you will be shooting. This will help avoid any interruption or quality issues in the feed.

Tip: Turn off any other device that may be using the same WiFi connection to free up bandwidth.



Camera Position & Quality

Please ensure that the camera is at the best level for viewers. On average, having the camera at eye level is optimum but CIDOT understands that for some live videos a better experience may be above eye level.

If you are using a phone, we recommend using the back camera for optimal video quality.

Tip: Placing a mirror behind the phone can allow you to see yourself during the feed.



Background

We recommend backgrounds that speak to the natural attributes of the destination. Please ensure you check your background for any blemishes or distractions.

For indoor filming, we highly recommend that you take the time to curate a clean, compelling environment. This may require you to make adjustments to stage your environment.



Environment

Please ensure the following:

- Avoid persons walking into the stream.
- Ensure you check any mirrors that may reflect your surroundings.
- Reduce any unwanted sounds.
- Area has sufficient lighting for the purposes of the video.

Tips & Tricks

Industry tips on how to make better videos

Background & Lighting



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Use a Clean Background.



Be deliberate about the background you use for filming. Nothing looks less professional than a messy or distracting background.



One easy way to get a professional look for your video is to use a solid-colored background. A wall, a bedsheet, or a large sheet of backdrop paper are all good options. Make sure your subject stands several feet away from the backdrop to avoid casting shadows on it.



It's also a good idea to shoot a video in a “professional” environment: the place where you actually work or spend time. For instance, [Amy Landino](#), makes her professional videos in her home office. Make sure to check out this video [**next slide**] for both a great example of a filming set and some great tips on how to actually set up a home office.



Be careful not to film with a window, light or other reflective surface in the background of your shot. You could inadvertently catch the camera in the reflection. This will also cause your subject to look dark/ shadowy.



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Pick the right background

The background you choose will depend on the type of video you're producing, your goals and your audience. The main two types are:

Real backgrounds

which include a real-life environment such as an office, a living room or an outdoor location. Just make sure it contributes to your message.



Fake backgrounds

which include green screens, curtains, or papers. These are great for consistency. However, they are hard to set up and aren't recommended for beginners.



Decide which background you prefer

5 Use the right lighting

It's best to shoot in any of these three conditions as the natural light is so soft and cinematic:



Outdoors on a cloudy day



An hour after sunrise



An hour before sunset

If you need to shoot indoors, natural light is still your best bet.



Pick a room that gets a lot of natural light through big or multiple windows.



Add additional sources of light like ceiling lighting or table lamps.

Lighting is essential

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Audio, Filming & Editing Guidelines



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Prioritize Crisp, Clear Audio



Your audio quality is more important than your professional video quality. Most people are willing to watch a video that's not shot in HD or that's even a little grainy, as long as everything else about it is good. But fuzzy, indistinct audio is usually enough to make anybody hit the “back” button within a few seconds of starting to play a video.



Capture clear audio by putting your microphone as close to the subject as possible. You might want to use a pop filter to eliminate blips and crackles on the finished recording. Be aware of any background noise that your microphone might be picking up, too.



It's easy to tune out things like traffic, birds, and even the noise of the wind, but all of these sounds will be very obvious on your recording.

Always Use the Back Camera

- This may seem like an obvious rule, but it's easy to forget. The rear camera on a phone is better quality, has a higher resolution, and offers more features within the app. It will almost always give you better results.
- Do you need some tips for recording yourself? Okay, in many cases we'd still recommend using the rear camera, with your phone propped up on a desk or wall. If you prefer the handheld approach then you can use the front camera, but feel free to rotate the phone so you shoot in landscape mode.



Stability and focus



There are two big requirements for making a great video: holding the camera still and keeping it in focus.



Many phones, cameras, and camcorders have built-in image stabilization (IS). This helps keep your video steady, but you need to know its limitations. IS works better when you're holding the camera still to begin with—shooting while walking can easily result in unwanted camera shake.



Use a tripod or makeshift alternative to keep your camera still—even a bag of rice can serve as a great DIY stabilization device.

Record in Landscape Mode

- The simple first step to learning how to make professional videos is to remember to shoot in landscape mode—turn your phone on its side.
- Vertical, or portrait, videos are fine if you're only ever going to look at them on your phone. The moment you try to watch it on a TV, laptop, tablet, or almost any other device its ill-fitting orientation will jump out as a surefire sign of amateur hour.
Note: For live videos on some Social Media Platforms (e.g. Instagram) you are only allowed to film in portrait mode.
- You can fit more into the frame in landscape mode. This means less need to constantly pan left and right, which in turn leads to a classier looking finished product.



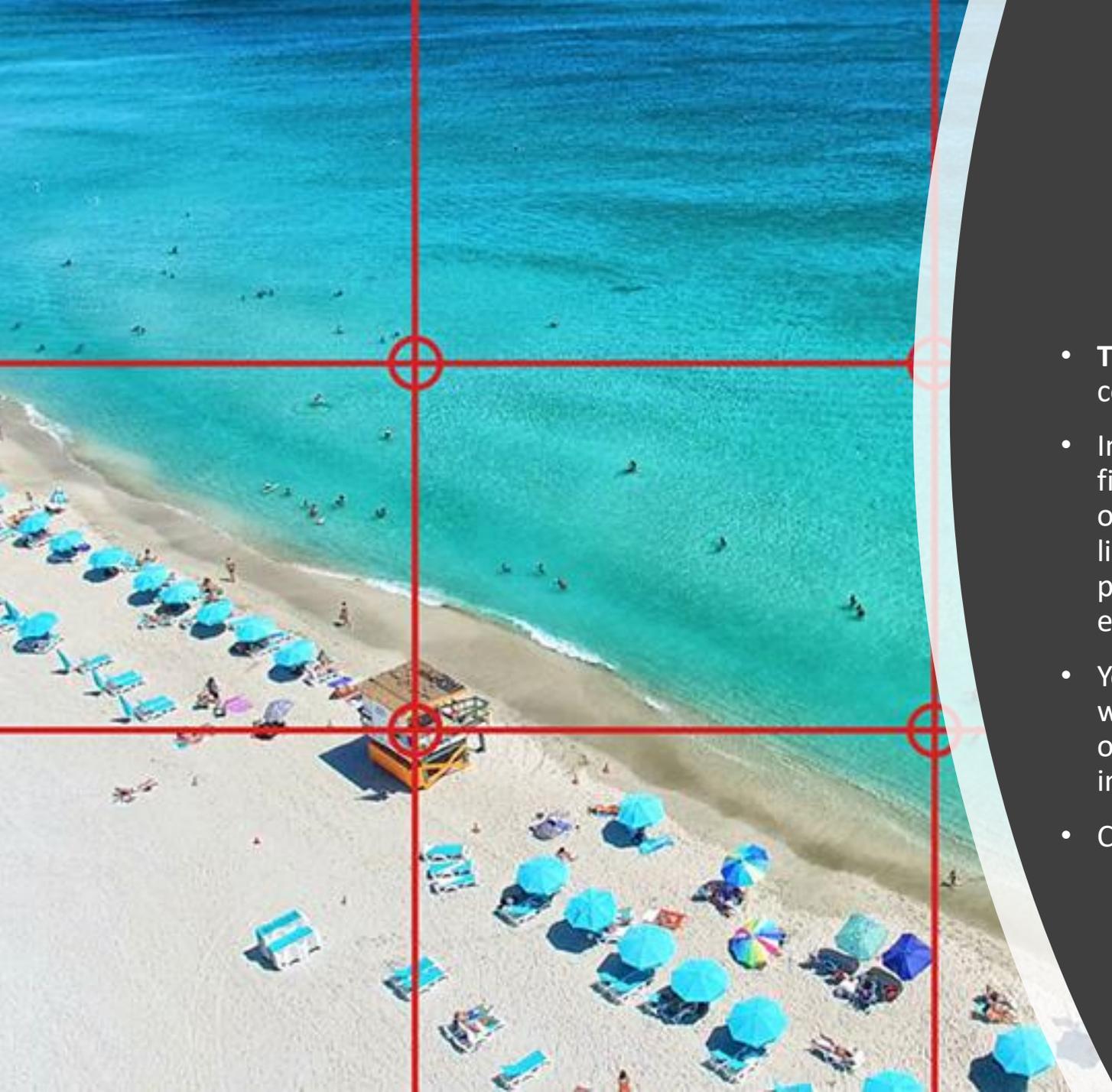
Add a Grid

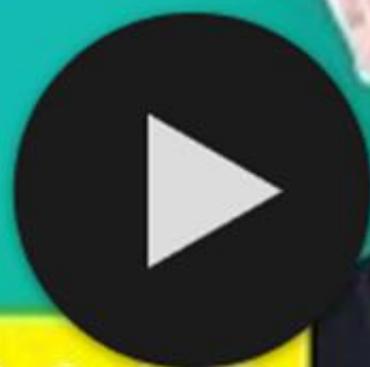
- The only thing worse than watching a video recorded in portrait mode is watching a video taken at a wonky angle. Adding a grid lets you use your background as a point of reference to ensure that your recording is always straight.
- Most devices have this option, available via a setting you may need to enable within your camera app.
- The grid helps you align your video against a line in the background to ensure you're recording straight videos.
- It aids composition, too. If you're recording people, position their eyes in level with the top grid line.



Understand the Rule of Thirds

- **The rule of thirds** is one of the most basic principles of film composition.
- Imagine that there's a 3-by-3 grid laid over the field you're filming. Instead of placing your subject right in the middle of the shot, you should place your subject along one of the lines of the grid. The points where the lines intersect are particularly strong areas of focus, so situate important elements of the video there, if you can.
- You don't have to follow the rule of thirds all the time, but while you're still learning, it's a good idea to adhere to it as often as possible. As you gain experience, you'll get a better instinct for when to stick with the rule and when to break it.
- Check the video on the next slide for examples of this.





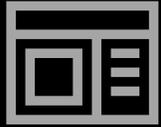
HOW TO FRAME

A TALKING HEAD

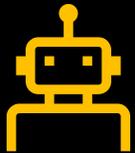
FIRSTCUT 



It's natural to just hold up the camera and start shooting. Yet if you want to make professional videos at home you need to experiment more with the angles you use.



Instead of shooting everything at eye level from one spot, try taking a wide shot then moving closer to your subject to shoot a close-up. Then edit the two shots together. Or hold the camera over your head to capture the action from above. Or crouch down and shoot upwards.



Have some fun trying to find what works. You don't need to make every shot completely different, but a bit of variety can work wonders.

Check out the video on the next slide.

Experiment With Angles

CAMERA

ANGLES





Zoom With Your Feet

- When you want to get a close up view of something, it's tempting to reach for your camera's zoom button. But this can come with problems. Most smartphones only offer digital zoom, which can degrade the quality of your image. Plus, the further you zoom the more likely your video is to become jerky, even if you're using image stabilization.
- So what do you do if you want to get closer to your subject? Zoom with your feet. Stop filming, move closer to the subject, and start shooting once more. Simple!

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Use Effects (But Don't Overuse Them)



Timelapse

iPhones have a great timelapse feature built into the default Camera app, but apps like [Lapse It](#) let you emulate this effect on Android.

Timelapses work brilliantly if you can steadily position your camera for a prolonged time over an area that's constantly changing—for example, on the top of a bridge to capture a sunset or star trails.



Slow Motion

Slow motion can add drama to a video or expose detail that's normally lost in fast moving action. Keep it short, though. Video normally plays back at 30 frames per second, so a clip shot at 120fps will last four times longer than the real-world speed.

Video effects are the equivalent of photo filters. They look great when used properly, but you can easily overdo it. Still, most cameras and smartphones offer a few options that can add some pizzazz to your videos.

Personal Appearance



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Work On Your Camera Presence.



The way you carry yourself on camera has a big impact on how professional your content looks. Appearing nervous, fidgety, or uncomfortable on camera will distract viewers from your message.



Fortunately, this is something you can improve with practice. If you weren't born with great camera presence, the video on the next slide will provide you with some helpful tips.

DO YOU
LOVE
YOU?



CODE OF CONDUCT



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Code of Conduct

- The Partner must not use obscene language or gestures. This includes any music that you may choose to play.
- The Partner must not use illegal substances or items.
- The Partner must be appropriately dressed in respects to their craft and/or activity.
- Ensure that there is no branding of competitive destinations within the video shoot (i.e. country flags).
- The Partner agrees that no additional persons are to take part in live session takeovers or videos unless approved by CIDOT beforehand.
- The Partner as the Host will only use CIDOT social page(s) for the purpose of a live session takeover and must log out/relinquish access once finished.
- The Partner as the Host(s) will not alter any existing content, post any additional content, or view/respond to any direct messages once they have access to CIDOT social channels.
- The Partner as the Host will not accept any requests to join live video unless previously authorized by CIDOT.
- The Partner must not engage in any dialogue that is negative in nature, about politics or religion. Avoid/ignore any comments and/or questions that are not in relation to the topic/activity of the video.
- The Partner must not get caught up in any local issue conversations. If persistent questions start to arise whilst on the live session, a CIDOT team leader will respond with messaging.



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Source Information

Some of the content in this presentation was sourced from:

<https://wave.video/blog/12-simple-tips-for-making-your-videos-look-more-professional/>

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-simple-tips-to-record-great-looking-home-videos/>

<https://visme.co/blog/video-tips/>