

# How to Make a Quick and Effective Video Blog

By Steve Mack

Creating a video blog is actually easier than you may think. In fact, a basic video blog can be done – start to finish – in about an hour.

A video blog is an informal video message that can be used to deliver basic information or to tell a story. It has a relatively short life span for viewing. The most important benefit of a video blog is that it allows you to make a personal connection with your employees and/or your community.

With that in mind, here are my three “rules of thumb” for creating a great video blog:

**1 - Make It Quick** - A basic video blog is only a few minutes long. You'll cover two or three main points. That's it. Refer your viewers to your website for more information.

**2 - Keep It Simple** - A video blog doesn't have to be fancy. The idea is not to create a high-end promotional video. It's a quick, personal way of sending a message.

**3 - Add Some Emotion** - A video blog can convey your personality in a way that an email or memo can't. Video is a visual medium so you can put a little emotion into your message.

So, with these three guidelines in mind let's look at the 5 steps for making a video blog.

## **Step 1 - Video tape a basic message.**

While you can use an expensive video camera to tape a video blog, an inexpensive video camera will also get the job done. I've used a high end professional video camera and also \$200 Sony Handycam (model DCR-HC28), both of which have worked fine. Write two or three main points you want to make on a 3x5 notecard and tape the card to the video camera, right next to the lens. This will act as a low-budget teleprompter, allowing you to read directly from your notes to deliver the video message. You want to stick to your message and having the notes right there helps you to do this while keeping eye contact with the viewer.

## **Step 2 - Upload the video to your computer.**

Most camcorders require a firewire cable (1394 interface in geek talk) and a firewire card to upload video to a computer. If your computer doesn't have a firewire connection card you either have to get a one OR you can buy the new FlipVideo cameras that have a USB port built in. This allows you to connect the video camera directly to your computer. FlipVideo cameras run from \$130-\$230 in price and are available online at [www.theflip.com](http://www.theflip.com) or at retailers like Best Buy. Once you connect your camera to your computer you can use Windows Movie Maker (on PCs) or iMovie (on Macs) to upload the video. These are free programs that allow you to

upload the video and make basic edits. Uploading a 90 second video from a camcorder only takes a couple of minutes.

### **Step 3 - Edit the video.**

You can use either one of the free video editing programs I mention in Step 2, or a higher end program if you have one. Some of the simple edits I've done for video blogs include adding logos and images, putting transition fades between the clips, and adding text and music. Putting a logo, image or text at the beginning and end of the message is a nice way to start an end the blog. Fades are easy to add and provide nice transitions. You can use text to emphasize your main points in the blog or your website url. And music at the start and end can make the blog sound good. All of these edits are done with basic drag and drop functionality.

### **Step 4 - Export the video file.**

After the edits are done export the video. Windows Movie Maker allows you to set the outputted file size you want for the final video. For web use you generally want to keep your files under 50 MB, but for a 2 minute video blog a file size of about 10 MB will work just fine. This provides good quality for web viewing while keeping the file size low enough so the viewer will not have to wait for the video to load. Both Windows Media and QuickTime formats are good for web use.

### **Step 5 - Upload the video blog to the web.**

Web sites like Google Video and YouTube allow you to post video files for web viewing and both provide this service for free. Once your video blog is on the web you can easily link to it. You can put a link on your web page, in an email, or in an email newsletter. You can also embed the video clip onto your web page. This last feature is great because you viewer doesn't have to leave your web page to watch the video. And Google Video allows you to post a video as "unlisted", which is similar to an unlisted phone number. You can send the link out to your community, but the video won't be listed in search engines. This is a nice feature that allows you to send a message to your community without having it posted for the world.

That's it! I hope I've given you enough to get started. As you get more comfortable with video blogs you can add more editing tricks. In my video blogs I try to keep to the basic rules of thumb to ensure that I keep the viewer engaged. Contact me if you have any questions about video blogs.

### **About the author:**

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