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READY STEADY GO!

Colin Riddle and Joshua Richards take the Easy Steady rig from IDX for a spin



2010 IOV Awards - The Short-list By Kevin Cook



1.0.1

Game Changer -DSLR lens guides: Wedding & Events





Business Start Up - Exit Strategy By Kevin Cook



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To good to be true?

Sorry to sound repetitive, but there was yet another thread on the IOV's forums recently where some members were extolling the virtues of buying kit from overseas and saving a pound or two in the process. Whilst there's some instant gratification on making savings this way, I wish these people would think a little harder about the implications of this and whether they are really getting the best deal. It doesn't take the intuition of Sherlock Holmes to find out that some of these sites operate very dubiously. If you are in doubt - just Google them (obviously ignoring the glowing reviews put up by the sites themselves).

It is very easy to simply look at the advertised web price but there's often hidden charges and sometimes import duties/tax which some hope they'll get away without paying. Dodging these taxes is illegal - and therefore not the kind of activity you would expect from someone calling themselves a professional. By the time you've added all



these extras and shipping costs the difference between a homecountry dealer and one from overseas is not going to be that areat.

Probably one of the most common complaints you will hear about rouge online dealers is that they do not keep to their promised delivery dates. They will nearly always state that the item is available from stock - or will have a 3-to-5 day delivery time. This is often a complete lie as they themselves hold no stock and will merely go and try to source your order from elsewhere - possibly from the other side of the planet.

It is true that warranties can be extended to you by overseas dealers (or you can buy additional insurance to cover normal warranty issues) but the cost of these will generally take it beyond the cost of buying nearer to home. Remember, as a nonconsumer purchase, if the product is DOA or becomes faulty, your beef will be with the dealer who you bought it from and not the manufacturer.

We've all heard of horror stories where these deals have gone sour. But we also hear stories where buyers have successfully sourced kit from far away (or from local dealers who sell 'grey' products) and didn't experience any problems. Video kit is generally pretty reliable so there's no surprise there. However, crap happens, and when it does its far better to have your dealer close by to ensure a speedy remedy. A good local dealer will also be in a better position to help you with loan equipment whilst your problem is being sorted. They can't always do this, but you can

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The Cook Retort



Foreword 📕 📕

bet your bottom dollar that an overseas dealer definitely can't.

Now on to the other implications of supporting local business. If you look at an organisation such as the IOV, which exists for the benefit of its members, a substantial part of its funding comes from advertising and sponsorship. These monies manifest in support for the production of Focus, the management of the website, the exhibition, the awards, local events... but also they support the general day-today admin of the IOV.

If everyone bought from overseas or 'grey' we would very quickly see the demise of local dealers - shortly followed by the demise of national representation from the manufacturers - and ultimately their combined financial support for the IOV. This can already be seen with some deal-direct software manufacturers who put very little, if nothing at all, into supporting local production communities (a practice which demonstrates their short-term view on their business). In this godforsaken scenario, to continue to provide the same benefits the IOV would have to ramp-up membership subs considerably.

So, next time you are attracted by the apparent low price of an overseas or grey product - think carefully. It might cost you, and the rest of us, a lot more than you think!

Kevin Cook

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Top 5 announced in the 2010 IOV Awards

With the short-list judging for the 2010 IOV Awards having been completed in early August, the following members should be congratulated on reaching the finals. In no particular order - please see the list of finalists below.

All short-listed titles have now gone through to final judging - and will be ordered 1st through to 5th for each category. The final running order will not be announced until the Awards Ceremony on the evening of 13th October at the Ricoh Arena.

Tickets for the ceremony are now available from the Awards

section of the IOV website www.iov.com/provideo. Tickets cost £49.95 per person and include gala dinner, table wine and entertainment.

You can also book hotel accommodation to suit a range of budgets from the 'Where to stay' section of the site.

Once again, our hearty congratulations go to all the finalists and wish them luck on the final judging. We also want to thank every member who supported the awards by entering this year. The standards were, once again, extremely high.

Kevin Cook IOV Executive Administrator



BEST CORPORATE VIDEO - BEST WEDDING DAY FILM - BEST DOCUMENTARY BEST MUSIC VIDEO - BEST FILM - BEST OPEN - BEST OVERALL PRODUCTION

2010 IOV Awards Short-listed entrants

Corporate

Richard Wakefield (A3225) Matthew Derbyshire (A2288) Richard Knew (A1820) Gerry Lewis (A2985) Simon Reed (A1774)

Wedding Day Film

Stefan Grela (A2775) Steve Towle (A1524) Vince Babbra (A2170) Michael Cottrill (A2051) Richard Daly (A2195)

Documentary

Chris Abram (A1924) Christopher Smith (A2148) Andrew Ogden (A2523) Stuart Boreham (A2559) Michael Cottrill (A2051)

Main sponsors of the 2010 IOV Awards

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Film

Chris Waterlow (A0397) Marty Stalker (A2910) Nick Kirk (A1984) Stuart Boreham (A2559) Richard Daly (A2195)

Open

Nick Kirk (A1984) Matthew Derbyshire (A2288) Michael Cottrill (A2051) Steve Hart (A1911) Clive Jackson (A2545)

Music

Nicky Brown (A2926) Marty Stalker (A2910) Pete James (A2845) Chris Pinches (A1425) Vince Babbra (A2170)





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Full details of our extensive range of fluorescent and tungsten lighting, and our studio design and installation service are available from our website.



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Sony unveils world's first consumer interchangeable lens HD camcorder

Sony have recently introduces the NEX-VG10E - the world's first consumer HD camcorder with interchangeable lenses. It's also the first Handycam® featuring an extra-large Exmor APS HD CMOS sensor that allows the creation of exquisitely cinematic shallow depth of field effects

Compatible with a choice of high quality E-mount lenses, it's the first consumer camcorder that offers the same breadth of creative expression enjoyed by DSLR photographers. Alongside the three currently available Emount lenses, users of the NEX-VG10E can experience a wide variety of A-mount DSLR optics by using the optional LA-EA1 mount adaptor - including awardwinning Sony G lenses, fixedfocal length Carl Zeiss portrait lenses and other models from macro to super-telephoto.

At the heart of the NEX-VG10E is a 14.2 effective megapixel Exmor APS HD CMOS sensor that's teamed with Sony's powerful BIONZTM processor to capture very high resolution video and still images.

Approximately 19.5 times bigger than the standard sensor found in other consumer camcorders, the APS-C sized



imager also enables an extremely shallow depth of field. This allows videographers to achieve 'cinematic' results with beautiful background defocus (bokeh). In addition, the ability to capture DSLR-quality still images gives videographers extra omnidirectional microphone

shooting flexibility on assignment with less to carry.

Full HD 1920x1080 video images are captured in AVCHDTM format at up to the maximum 24 Mbps bit rate for superlative detail and clarity. Unlike many digital still cameras including DSLR that support HD video, there's virtually no restriction on continuous shooting time. Just slip in your choice of either Memory Stick PRO DuoTM or SD

media cards and capture Full HD video and JPEG still images for easy transfer into your existing PC storage and editing environment. The NEX-

VG10E comes supplied as standard with an image-stabilised E18-200mm F3.5-

6.3 OSS lens that offers a powerful 11x optical zoom range. Because of its optimized design for video shooting, this highquality E-mount lens offers smooth, ultra low noise autofocus and iris control. Inbuilt Optical SteadyShot image stabilisation assures clearer video images when you're shooting handheld. At wide angle settings, Active Mode enhances anti-shake performance even further, steadying jittery images even while walking. The lens also features a circular aperture for the creation of beautiful bokeh effects whether you're shooting video or stills.

Reflecting the demands of serious videographers, sound quality matches the phenomenal imaging performance of the NEX-VG10E. The Quad Capsule Spatial Array Stereo Microphone uses advanced processing algorithms to combine signals from four separate



capsules. The result is exceptionally clear stereo audio with a highly directional response: this allows videographers to capture more sound from the subject they're shooting, and less of distracting sounds around them. There's also a jack for adding an optional external stereo mic, plus a headphone jack for audio monitoring.

With a photo-realistic 921k dot resolution, the 7.5cm/3 inch-type Xtra Fine LCD features TruBlackTM technology for an exceptionally detailed, high contrast view of images and menu settings. The LCD is supplemented by a highresolution (1152k dot) electronic viewfinder that assists easy framing and monitoring. The viewfinder helps operator capture clear images in bright daylight and its angle can be easily adjusted for comfortable operation.

The NEX-VG10E is compact, beautifully balanced and easy to handle, even for novice videographers. An intuitive jog dial and hotkeys make it easy to navigate camera menus and adjust shooting parameters.

Videographers can also enjoy precise manual control over Iris, Shutter Speed, Gain and White Balance for professional results.

A range of official accessories includes the ECM-CG50 Shotgun Microphone that attaches to the camcorder's accessory shoe. There's also a choice of rechargeable battery options. including the NP-FV100 that provides power for up to 330 minutes continuous HD shooting. A dedicated soft carrying case LCS-VCD is also available as an option.

Offered to customers as a free download, Vegas Movie Studio HD Platinum 10 video editing software includes everything you need to produce HD movies including tools for video compositing, colour correction and sound mixing. You can also upload movies to web, burn them to Blu-ray Disc[™] or author DVDs with custom menus and graphics.

The Handycam® NEX-VG10E interchangeable lenses Full HD camcorder is available from October 2010.

For more details please visit www.sony.co.uk/hub/handycam/ latest/1

SONY

Would you like a cool bag with that sir?

Worried about your camera or tape and media stock overheating in the summer or getting cold in the winter? Penridge Multi-Media are offering a free media case which has a usual selling price of £29.99p to all IOV members placing an order this month. This is the professional's answer. This case is padded and insulated, suitable for cameras, media and accessories.

It incorporates a top carrying handle and shoulder strap and is soft padded case with a full lining of insulating material within the soft black lining. There is a

folding separator for the main compartment and there are front and side zipped pockets, external elasticated net compartments and even an internal key clip.

There's no catch, even if your order is for one head cleaning tape you'll still get the gift. For those of you who may have already bought a case then they will supply an alternative gift. For a snap shot of some of their latest offers see their advert on page 4.

For more details please contact Penridge Multi-Media direct - see Recordable Media in the Trade Directory on page 13.



The following list of members have passed their Associate Member exam and are now able to use the IOV logo in their marketing material. They have also been set up with a web page which must be linked to when the IOV logo is placed on their website. Full details of the benefits of Associate Membership can be found at www.iov.com/join

Newly-accredited Associate Members

Main VideoSkills sponsor

Alice Barker A M Inst V Neil Hall McLean A.M.Inst.V. Ian Sandall A.M.Inst.V

Chateuneuf, France Semley, Dorset Manchester

Please note: Newly accredited Associate Members are published in Focus each month and will be accurate at time of publication.

IDX Shoulder mount

IDX Technology has launched a Shoulder Stabilisation System designed for universal attachment of all hand-held camcorders and digital SLR cameras. The system provides fully adjustable shoulder stability and control for professional camcorders, converting power from IDX's high capacity ENDURA V-Mount battery series into significantly longer runtimes in comparison to a standard camcorder battery. Depending on the preference of the user and input voltage requirements for the camcorder in operation, the stabilisation system has various configuration options.

The Shoulder Stabilisation System is based around the A-CA74E shoulder adaptor base designed for mounting the camera. The position of the camera can be fixed at various positions on the horizontal base to achieve the perfect balance. A strap. It increases the cushioned shoulder pad is located on the underside of the base for comfort while a battery plate is available at the rear for attaching an optional P-V series plate, which in turn allows the connection of a V-Mount

battery. The angle and vertical position of the battery plate is fully adjustable to suit the operator's comfort, preference and best balance.

The A-HG74 is the hand grip support option and contains three cushioned hand grips, two

located at the front and a third at the rear to add support to the chest area. Each handle can be fully adjusted and locked in position as required.

Using the hand grip supporter with the A-CA74E offers a considerably more professional and ergonomic method of supporting the camera than using the camcorder palm

production value by minimising vibration and unwanted movement, while also reducing the strain placed on the arm and wrist when operating for long periods of time. The A-HG74 also has an integrated tripod



adaptor base for attaching the complete system to a standard tripod.

There are three optional V-Mount plates that regulate the battery's 14.4V to output a selected DC voltage. The P-V257 model outputs 5V or 7.3V, the P-V212 outputs 12V and the P-V284 outputs 8.4V. There is a choice of seven optional DC cables which connect from the

> regulated D-Tap of the P-V plate and plugs into the

camera battery channel or power input

terminal. On each P-V plate there is a second D-Tap output which can be used to support

equipment such as camera lights and audio accessories.

The shoulder stabilisation system will be demonstrated for the first time at IBC 2010 in September. IDX Technology is in Hall 11, Stand C21.

For more details please contact IDX direct - see Batteries & Power in the Trade Directory on page 11.



Autocue will showcase its first ever broadcast monitors and video servers at IBC 2010.

There will be four Grade 2 broadcast monitors in the new range, all ideally suited to both production and post-production environments. The first sizes available will be the 24" and 42" monitors with the 17" and 32" arriving later this year.

Also being showcased at IBC are Autocue's first three standalone, Linux-based video servers. The servers feature up to four bi-directional HD/ SD channels for simultaneous record and playout, and up to 12TB of storage.

The introduction of these new products forms part of a new strategy by Autocue to extend its reach within the broadcast sector, As CEO, Frank Hyman explains, "These new product areas are a natural evolution for the company and demonstrate the true breadth of our broadcast knowledge, design and development capability."

Visit Autocue at IBC stand Hall 11, Stand F50.

For more details please contact Autocue direct - see Teleprompting in the Trade Directory on page 13.

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WTS Broadcast are now offering 0% finance on all Sony XDCAM EX, XDCAM HD, HDCAM, HDCAM SR and Trimaster monitors and accessories. Offer ends 31st July 2010, terms and conditions apply.

For more information call (0)208 594 3336



Steady on Hague!

The DSLR phenomenon has grown at an extraordinary rate recently as more cameramen look to take advantage of the high quality HD movie footage these cameras can capture - so Hague Camera Supports have now designed a stabilizer specifically for this range of cameras which will allow the user to further enhance the quality of their productions.



The New Hague DSLR Motion-Cam is a handheld camera stabilizing system that has been specifically designed for DSLR cameras such as the Canon 5D and similar. These stills cameras have become extremely popular as alternatives to camcorders due to the high quality recording ability when used in HD Movie Mode, but unfortunately they are difficult to hold, especially when you require moving camera shots.

With the DSLR Motion-Cam you can create super smooth "Steadicam type" shots. The new DSLR Motion-Cam has been designed to cope with different lenses being used and overcome the fact that the tripod hole is never in the centre of balance - making them difficult to balance on some stabilizers. On the new DSLR Motion-Cam Hague have increased the range of movement forward and back, plus added extra sideways movement for balance correction

The crucial part of any stabilizer is the gimble, as it is essential that the handle is totally free moving. The Hague DSLR Motion-Cam's gimble has a highly polished ball with a nylon socket, plus a radial ball bearing handle ensuring super free movement. This makes it far superior and more effective than any other "ball type" stabilizer on the market.

The stabilizer is supplied with a selection of counterbalance weights to support cameras up to 2kg. Once balanced, forward and back fine trim is achieved by manually moving the camera plate forward or back - whilst sideways fine trim achieved by hinging the weights on the counterbalance plate from side to side.

For more details please contact Hague Camera Supports direct - see Tripods & Camera Supports in the Trade Directory on page 13.

Hassle-free Hire Insurance

www.hireacamera.com has announced a new insurance product to help safeguard its equipment when being hired. The policy which is an extension of its own insurance, ensures that clients who rent are protected from most perils that might befall them.

Managing Director Guy Thatcher said, "We have been working hard behind the scenes with our insurance adviser Aaduki to arrange a product that allows us to protect our own equipment whilst on hire and to extend the protections to clients who hire from us as well." The new policy extension has all the benefits of cover that Aaduki offers on its bespoke photographic policies including full theft cover and accidental damage in the UK and up to 60 davs worldwide.

Guy added, "This new insurance extension means that customers can hire with confidence from us, pay a small amount towards our premium and have the security of knowing they are covered in the event of something going wrong. The insurance extension will be subject to the usual policy excess and we have put all the details online on our website so customers can review it before they decide if they wish to include it with their hire."

The new insurance product is an opt-in policy that customers can choose to add when they book their hire. Customers can of course provide their own insurance should they wish to.

For more details please contact Hireacamera.com direct - see Equipment Rental in the Trade Directory on page 12.

New PAG power

PAG, the camera power and lighting specialist, has introduced a new version of its budget broadcast battery, the PAG L95e. The 95 watt-hour Li-Ion battery is compatible with Anton-Bauer chargers and camera mounts.

The PAG L95e (Model 9310A) is a 14.8V 6.5Ah battery that has a maximum continuous output current rated at 7 amps. It has been designed as a high-quality, low-cost replacement for the Anton-Bauer Dionic 90, and is directly compatible with cameras that incorporate the Anton-Bauer battery mount. The significant advantage of the new PAG L95e is that it can be charged using existing stocks of Anton-Bauer Li-Ion compatible chargers.

PAG claims that its L95e has a better quality-to-price ratio than any other battery in this market. Premier-quality materials and branded Li-Ion cells are used in its construction. It features a comprehensive electronic protection circuit which is itself protected from the results of damage to the cell pack. PAG asserts that no other manufacturer protects its Li-Ion batteries as thoroughly, and guarantees the battery for 18 months.

The battery's capacity indicator displays charge status through

New 'Blue' from Vinten

Vinten is launching its new Vision blue at IBC2010. This new, competitively priced tripod system is designed to provide the experienced camera operator with professional support to match the extremely high-performance of today's popular small lightweight camcorders and DSLRs equipped for video. Vision blue addresses the need for a broadcast quality tripod system capable of genuinely balancing the smaller, lightly accessorised cameras, managing payloads between 2.1 -5kg / 4.6 – 11lbs with a low centre of gravity of approx. 55mm.

The Vision blue head incorporates Vinten's innovative and award winning Perfect Balance technology, an integral part of Vinten's existing Vision range, which enables consistent movement and easy positioning of the camera at any angle helping operators to achieve perfect shots with minimal effort. It also features infinitely adjustable Vision LF drag technology for silky smooth movement and precise framing. This functionality has never before been available for such light cameras, and will bring a new consistency of movement to every user.

The Vision blue is sold as a complete system with either a

the use of five LEDs. Each LED represents approximately

20% of available capacity. When the battery is on-load the display will also provide an estimate of remaining camera run-time. It uses the five LEDs to indicate the remaining hours and minutes. Battery data such as serial number, date of manufacture, number of cycles and temperature can be displayed on the screen of the Anton-Bauer charger (2000 series).

There is no restriction on the number of PAG L95e batteries that can be transported by air in hand luggage, because its capacity is below 100 watt-hours.

The L95e has a self-recovery feature that enables it to be reset after the protection circuit has been tripped, by simply pressing the display button. No 'sleep mode' is required since the display does not discharge the battery between periods of use.

For more details please contact PAG direct - see Batteries & Power in the Trade Directory on page 11.

two-stage aluminium or carbon fibre tripod and a choice of floor or mid-level spreader. It also includes a high contrast blue LED illuminated levelling bubble for quick and accurate set-up in all lighting situations.

-

"All camera operators and professional videographers want the same thing: smooth, predictable and controllable movement; fast set-up; and a reliable product," said

reliable product," said Peter Harman, Vinten product manager. "With Vision

Vinter Vision blue, we can now bring true Vinten Vision performance to users - ensuring for the very first time - that operators of the smallest professional cameras can work without creative compromise. We know this is something the market has been waiting for and we are delighted to be able to showcase the Vision blue for the first time at IBC (Hall 11 - Stand F60)" concludes Harman.

For more details please contact Vinten direct - see Tripods & Camera Supports in the Trade Directory on page 13.



Canon's latest professional video cameras. **The new benchmark.**

XF305 and XF300 have been designed to provide outstanding image quality. For the first time ever in a handheld professional video camera, the new models utilise the MPEG-2 Full HD recording codec with 4:2:2 colour sampling at up to 50Mbps, capturing broadcast-quality footage in stunning detail.

> Canon XF305

XF305 XF300

Also including peace of mind with Canon Professional Services support.



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Area IOV News

North & West **Yorkshire** By Roger Staniland Wow what an evening, 13 members assembled in



the function room at the Lord Darcy in Alwoodley on the outskirts of Leeds to watch and listen to a presentation by Jason Torbitt a freelance Steadicam Operator on the workings of that piece of equipment we see almost everyday on our television screen and yet probably don't know that much about.

Jason, a freelance Steadicam Owner-Operator, Lighting Cameraman and Camera Operator who works across Broadcast and Film productions, and is based in Manchester and London. With 6-years of experience in the industry, he has steadily built up a reputation for his high quality of work, stamina, enthusiasm and professionalism which certainly came across in his presentation. Jason works throughout the UK, Europe and Worldwide and has worked in most European countries, and is well experienced travelling and flying

with equipment. Jason has worked across Feature Films, Shorts, Music Promos, Drama, Outside Broadcasts, Studio, Live Events, Television Series, Commercials, Music Concerts, News, Sport, Soaps, Documentary and the Corporate sector

Jason commenced his presentation by describing and showing the different pieces of equipment that goes into making up the steadicam including the support required prior to mounting on the body. His first piece of equipment was the Mk-V **Evolution Modular Sled System** with which he showed the setting up procedure to ensure that the camera was correctly balanced. This consists of first checking the drop time by lifting the bottom weight to the horizontal position and letting it drop. Correctly balanced it should swing without any turn.

The second test is the static balance which is to ensure that camera mount etc is level in both directions. The dynamic balance comes next which ensured that the equipment always returns to the correct position and finally the swing check ensuring that the whole system swings in line



without any rotation. The weight of this equipment has to be felt to be believed. Therefore a snugly fitting vest is the answer to working with this equipment for long periods.

Jason then showed his latest acquisition, the Tiffen Steadicam. The Tiffen offers you a complete line of state-of-the-art models to meet your film and video needs and is committed to support the needs of the motion picture, broadcast and professional imaging industries and will continue to develop the latest Steadicam technology

All in all a wonderful and extremely informative evening and many thanks must go to Jason and his colleague John for putting on such a great presentation.

For more information about Jason Torbitt and his work, his website is www.steadicamfacilities co.uk

Midlands

By Chris North The IOV VideoSkills evening workshop is currently touring the regions



Area 6 was fortunate to be one of the first areas to host this seminar session in May. Presented by Martin Kay, the founder of Zen Computers, it sets out all you need to know about codecs and video compression to achieve the best

Dorset. Wiltshire & Hampshire By Bryan Stanislas Over the last 18-months or so we have managed to



have at least one meeting a month at either Botley Fire Station or New Forest Post Productions premises on the Hampshire/Wiltshire boarder,



and most efficient distribution of videos on the web.

Martin explains the basics of compression and what you can do to reduce file sizes and get the best download speeds whilst maintaining picture quality. How you can make life easier for the compression codecs by thinking about your subject matter, background and camera movement as well as how to calculate file sizes and bit rates to ensure that your videos can be viewed easily by most web users.

Martin tests compression to

with subjects ranging from camera mounting systems through to talks from Tiffen on filters and post production filter software, all with great success. Nick Curtis of NFPP has been a valuable helper and asset to Area 13 in providing not only a central venue for members to attend but also with the facilities that NFPP offer

With this in mind and due to the success that Area 13 has enjoyed so far with its meetings,



We had a very full evening from 7.30 until after 10 o'clock, with loads of questions and very full answers - illustrated by a variety of video clips in various forms that Martin had loaded up. So if you want to get to grips with compression and codecs then you should not miss this session when it comes to your area.



I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Nick Curtis M.M.Inst.V has stepped forward to help out with IOV Area 13. Thanks Nick!

Find out about IOV Meetings in your Area...

The IOV holds meetings on an area basis throughout the year. If you would like to receive notification by email of when your nearest meetings are being held, simply register on the IOV's website. You can then subscribe to receive automatic emails when new meeting notices are posted by the Area Rep. Full details of how to register and subscribe can be found in the 'Using this Site' section located in the upper main menu of the website

Scotland North

Brian Rae - brian.rae@iov.co.uk 01224 862100

Scotland South

Tony Nimmo - tony.nimmo@iov.co.uk 01555 661541

North East England Mike Trewhella - mike.trewhella@iov.co.uk 0191 536 6535

North West England Phil Janvier - phil.janvier@iov.co.uk 0151 487 9338

S. Yorks, Humberside & Lincs. Brian Fernley - 0115 989 2787 brian.fernley@iov.co.uk Ross Ironfield - 01522 872 328 ross.ironfield@iov.co.uk

North & West Yorkshire Roger Staniland - roger.staniland@iov.co.uk 07511 548189

North Wales & Borders Rowland Barker - rowland.barker@iov.co.uk 01490 430507

Midlands Chris North - chris.north@iov.co.uk

01530 836700 East Anglia & A1 Corridor Bill Platts - bill.platts@iov.co.uk 01733 370922

South Wales & Bristol Channel Rep to be confirmed

West London, Middlesex & Herts. Emerson Bovell -020 8575 2842 emerson.bovell@iov.co.uk

Oxfordshire, M1 Corridor & NW London Anthony Barnett - anthony.barnett@iov.co.uk 01553 776995

Essex, Herts, N, E & Central London Zulqar Cheema - zulqar.cheema@iov.co.uk 01279 413260

West Country Lara & Ian Lewis - Iara.lewis@iov.co.uk 01752 691210

Dorset, Wiltshire & Hampshire Bryan Stanislas - bryan.stanislas@iov.co.uk 0845 260 7737

Sussex, Berks, Surrey & SW London Mike West - mike.west@ 01903 892951 iov.co.uk

Kent & SE London Peter Snell - peter.snell@iov.co.uk 01634 723838

Ireland - Ulster Rep to be confirmed

Ireland - Leinster Mark Quinn - mark.quinn@iov.co.uk 01 835 3389

Ireland - Munster John Berry - john.berry@iov.co.uk 021 436 2299

Ireland - Connacht John Murphy - john.murphy@iov.co.uk 087 688 6720

If you would like to present your products or services at local IOV meetings - please contact the IOV's Central Office on 020 8502 3817 or email info@iov.co.uk

24020122G e simple guide to finding the right supplier...

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Batteries & Power

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VICO EUSINES Start-Up Part Nine - Ext Strat

Like all good stories, the story of your videography business will need a beginning, middle and an end. Most of you will be at the beginning or in the middle of that story now, but the end is something that is rarely considered by those setting up a business – despite its inevitability.

Most live in hope that one day they will be able to sell up and retire on the proceeds but, in reality, that's not going to happen unless you plan for it. This month I'm going to examine the common conclusions to videography businesses.

Natural endings

Many of you will simply keep working right up until your last breath or until you are unable to continue. This might sound dramatic and the worst possible outcome, but to some of you it might be the most desirable conclusion. Videography is an enjoyable way to earn a living and to many outsiders it does not represent what they would call "work". Sure, running any business has its stresses and strains, and there are some activities that require some physical wellbeing, but generally speaking it's something that you can do at any stage of life. I also happen to believe that anything that keeps your brain active, as well as providing you with some physical demands, is a good

thing. If you can earn money at it too that's got to be a positive thing.

There are many

videographers who enter this business once they have reached retirement age and have the benefit of a company pension scheme or have taken early retirement. This is another indication that videography is something that you can do and enjoy right through your life. However, so that you don't leave a mess for those that you leave behind you will have to apply some thought as to what happens to existing clients, unfinished projects and any residual business that you leave behind.

The disappearing business

Another common scenario is that videography businesses are left to simply fade away or gradually run down. This will obviously depend on you having an alternative income such as pensions and savings. It might well be that videography has only provided for a little extra cash and losing it would not have a great impact on your lifestyle. Of all the scenarios, this is the most common. If you have not made previous provisions to allow this you will need to build pension savings into your pricing structure. After all, its got to come from somewhere.



Cashing in your chips

If your dream ending is that you will build the business to the point of selling it as a going concern (and retiring on the proceeds) then you will have to build the business in a way that it becomes sellable. This might vary from outright sale, to selling parts of the business or assets off, through to selling shares and retaining a silent interest in the business. Regardless of which scenario you desire, these are all challenging by the very nature of the business itself.

The vast majority of wedding videographers will have very little in the way of cash value in their future bookings. You might well get to the point of having bookings two or three years in advance, but it is unlikely that this will have any great book value. This is also true of corporate video. There might well be some regular clients with contracts extending over a year or so, but these will rarely be something with great value or certainty.

Having said this, there are ways in which you can increase your chances of selling the business and reaching your goal. Probably the most important thing is to depersonalise the business. If you build a brand around yourself any potential purchaser is unlikely to find this an attractive and safe investment as, potentially, the goodwill could end on your retirement from the business.

A strong and neutral brand is going to have much wider appeal. This doesn't mean you can't use names within the trading name, it just means that you need to concentrate your efforts on building a reputation for the business rather than one for yourself. This being said, the task is made much easier if you have a generic brand name, or maybe something with a location identity (e.g. Bristol Videography) as this can be more transparently transferred from proprietor to proprietor.

Naming your business in this way should also help you to establish distance between you, the person, and the business and services you provide. When you talk to clients use "We" as opposed to "1" – 'We provide a complete script to screen service...'

Company structure

Selling the business will be easier if you are trading as a limited company. Not only will it have a more established feel to it, but you will also have some more options open to you. Any existing contracts will be between your client and the business – and not you. This will give buyers additional confidence that you are not going to sell them the business and then continue to trade with your old clients.

With a limited company you also have the option to sell all or part of the shares. You could of course do this by way of a partnership agreement but a limited company shares offer is a lot clearer. You could, for instance, sell off part of the shares and retain a proportion to provide you with some residual value or even an income if the business can sustain it. Giving the new major shareholder first option on the sale of your own shares might also be an attractive proposition. In fact, there are quite a few variables which make forming a limited company a much more attractive proposition when it comes to selling the business on.

There will probably be a period where the business is transferred to its new owner and you will be retained for a certain period to ensure the smooth transition. You need to think about this as it might be as long as 12-months before you are fully detached. You will probably also have to agree to not set up business in competition with the new buyer for a given period after the sale – which is quite understandable.

Curb appeal

As I said at the beginning of this article, your exit strategy is probably not uppermost in your mind at present. However, by starting your business with this in mind might well pay dividends later. Try to put yourself in the mind of a buyer and think of the things that you would like to see in an off-the-shelf business. You would want a ready-made and established brand, a list of clients and contracts, proven and easy to adopt systems and procedures - and pretty much every piece of technology that will enable you to continue trading from day one. If you run your business with a weak or personalised brand image, do not maintain accurate and up to date client records, only have verbal agreements with your clients, run the business without formal structure or systems - and don't keep up to date with technology or at least keep it well maintained - let's face it, would you want to buy into it?

You'll note that I've not mentioned a healthy balance sheet as one would expect that this really goes without saying. However there is a great temptation, especially in relation to domestic work such as weddings, to do things on an undeclared cash-in-hand basis. Not only is this illegal (unless you declare it all), but it would take a foolish buyer to invest in a business which has apparently survived on undisclosed or unaccounted income.

Assets

Besides the equipment, and possibly business premises, there are other tangible assets you can build up in your business. The most valuable of which could be the images you have acquired on video. This is especially true of those who develop SIV titles. Not only will there often be a value in the copyright of the raw material, but you should also have a proven track record of sales and a database of customers who buy them. This is one of the strongest reasons why I believe that SIV production should be part of the makeup of a videography business. Not only does it present an opportunity for profits whilst you are in business but it will also represent a value should you ever decide to sell.

Agents & Buyers

Whatever format or structure of your business, if you get to the point of wanting to sell it on there is great merit in placing this in the hands of someone else. Whether you chose to do this through your accountant, your solicitor or a business transfer agency, the real value comes in placing a barrier between you and the buyer. There will no doubt be some negotiation, and whilst you might feel confident with this process it will get personal. You might well feel insulted by early offers, whereas your agency or representative should be able to shield you from this experience. It might cost you in the way of commission but you might also find their experience in negotiating a better deal pays for this

Of even greater importance, by handing this over to a third party you should be able to conceal the fact that your business is for sale up until the moment that your identity needs to be revealed. If you simple spread the word around this might have a negative impact on the business as it stands.

Whether you are selling yourself or through a third party, one of the first things you will have to consider is who the likely purchasers are. These will often be your competitors or even those who you employ. This is why it is important to maintain a good relationship with others in your industry. Not only would these people have an understanding of the nature of the business, but if you have done your job right and developed a strong brand they will also recognise the value.

Your exit from the business will become more and more important as time goes by. Whichever door you choose, planning for that journey will make it so much easier.

So long, farewell....

On that note, I think Video Business Start-up has come to a natural end. I hope the series has been of use one way or another - and that you all go on to build successful businesses. My only last parting word of advice is that, in business, there will be good days and bad days. Remember the good ones! ■ Kevin Cook F.Inst.V.

Notes: If you joined this article half-way through you can always catch up through the back issues of Focus which are published online - www.iov.com/focus.

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Colin Riddle and Joshua Richards take the Easy Steady rig from IDX for a spin

CR... This review very nearly didn't get written. Joshua and I arrived for our training session with IDX at Slough with minutes to spare after a frustrating, accident induced detour across country, guided by a Satnav that inexplicably, but clearly working within the boundaries of Murphy's law, had decided to speak to us only in Afrikaans. If it ever happens to you, it is worth knowing that "Het opnieuw berekenen" means "you are going the wrong way". It was worth it though!

From total beginners to enthusiastic Easy Steady users in under four hours is some sort of record. Easily understood when you know that the session was conducted by the guys who designed and manufactured the Easy Steady camera stabilization outfit marketed in the UK by IDX. Fabrizio Minuz and Riccardo Filippini's enthusiasm for their baby was infectious and their technical and user knowledge vast. Within minutes steadycam operation was methodically demystified, and, with our confidence boosted, practical demonstration began.

To demonstrate the Easy Steady's almost magical properties Riccardo Minuz did a fairly energetic piece of free form dance around a heavy broadcast camera - attached to him by a bionic arm. The camera remained motionless and pointing in the same fixed direction the entire time. Impressive!

The build

But hey, all steadycams do that don't they? Well yes, but the Easy Steady does it for a lot less money than most of the others and when you start to look closely at the build quality, the tolerances and the materials used it is quite obvious that the Easy Steady is not just a cheap version of a other makes, but in another class altogether.

Take that bionic arm again, actually the Stabilisation Arm. It is just one part of a modular system but its workmanship and finish have more in common with aircraft engineering than with film and TV grip equipment. Those isometric arms are machined out of solid aluminium bar. Other makers use presses to build their arms, a cheaper but less robust solution. Attention to detail is impressive. The whole modular system - and there is a lot of it (if you can think of an extra part you need, chances are it is already in the catalogue) - can be assembled with two star drivers and a flat head screwdriver! And the vest that supports the whole thing is built like body armour from Cordura fabric, with satisfyingly durable looking fittings and fastenings.

But what is the Easy Steady like to actually set up and work with? I don't know because due to a recurring back problem I only managed about ten minutes strapped inside the thing, but camera assistant Joshua Richards does and here's what he thinks.

Operation

JR... I would like to say firstly that I have many years experience with camera stabilisation systems and that I am familiar with other rigs such as Steadicam and GPI. But, I haven't and I'm not. In fact, this has been my first experience of a camera stabilisation system of any description. So to those of you well versed in the dark art of smooth movement, please forgive my layman approach.

To start with, a steadycam rig has three main components: the vest, the arm and the sled. The arm is where the real magic takes place. What is four springs in a twin parallelogram setup to some, is the exploitation of a natural (or possibly supernatural) phenomenon to others... or at least me. As we wanted to use our Panasonic AG-HPX500 camera with matte box and onboard mic (totaling over 7kg) we were given the 'Kit Free' to take away. This is the third setup in the IDX Easy Steady 'Lite & Go' range.

The Range

Now is probably a good time to explain the differences between the three rigs on offer from Easy Steady: 'One', 'Too' and 'Free'. To start with, the differences between the three systems are only found with the arms and the sleds. The basic arm, with its four light springs, is capable of handling cameras up to 4.5kg (9.92lbs). Replacing these with four heavy springs upgrades the arm to handle a weight of up to 8.5kg (18.73lbs) and it is also possible to use two light and two heavy springs to get just the right amount of support. As for the sleds, these all have the same telescopic centre post (65cm - 1.35m; 25.59" -51.96"), 7" LCD monitor, gimbal, head and camera plate.

Kit 'One' uses the basic arm and a sled which has a single Vlock or Gold Mount (optional) battery pack and a lightweight monitor and bracket. Kit 'Too' uses the upgraded arm and features a double battery pack on the sled. The double pack not only extends the battery life but also helps to counterbalance the weight of the larger cameras that the rig can now tolerate, with the upgraded arm. Kit 'Free' uses the same upgraded arm and the same sled as kit 'Too'. The difference is that the sled has an extra connections box below the head with additional 12V power and video in/out sockets. This allows for accessories such as a light or radio mic to be added to the sled. A more substantial monitor bracket is also fitted with the standard 15mm rods capable of taking larger HD monitors with HDMI connectivity and other accessories. The sled is internally wired too so there are fewer trailing leads. Nice touch!

Transport

The rig comes in a Pelican-style heavy-duty trolley case and there are a couple of problems with this. First is the fact that there is no foam padding around the sides of the case which results in an unhealthy clunk when the case is closed and moved to an upright position for transportation. Secondly, you still have a BNC video cable, monitor, monitor hood and key adjusters to store in the case, and you could reasonably assume that some would wish to carry a different weight spring set and even a spare battery. All this results in a lot of expensive and sensitive kit loose in the case. Ideally I would have liked to have seen a lot more foam inside, and with the shapes of the different components cut out so as to provide a snug and secure fit.



Set-up

From opening the case to being ready to press the red button is an acquired skill in itself, requiring practice. The rig works beautifully - but only if set up correctly! Every time the camera is put on the sled, the balance needs fine-tuning. It is quite remarkable how the slightest of changes to the camera - for instance the position of the view finder or on-board mic - affects the balance of the rig.

Something that many of you experienced steadycam operators will be aware of, but that I certainly wasn't, is the issue of balancing a rig in the open. It can be done, but even in a light breeze it requires greater effort to balance and control, as the rig is not working with you to stay upright, like it is designed to. Even if set up precisely though, on a breezy day the camera acts like a sail in comparison to the rest of the rig making it seem top heavy. A problem, I imagine, with steadycam rigs in general. However it requires very little effort to correct and fine movements can be achieved very easily.

When balancing you have several options. You can extend or contract the centre post (which directly affects the amount of effort required to keep the rig upright when moving forward or stopping suddenly) Then you can angle the batteries closer to or further way from the centre post and finally slide the batteries and/or monitor in or out from the post on their rod brackets. Then for fine-tuning the balance there are two screws below the camera plate which move it forward/backward and left/right.

CR... Balancing the camera and sled was perhaps the most demanding part of setting up. The levelling screws need very slight adjustments to affect the camera's position on the sled and have no calibrated markings or direction arrows to help you decide which way to turn them. We resorted to diagrams drawn on post-it notes eventually and this simple device speeded up the process considerably. When balance has been established the camera is spun ninety degrees from the horizontal and allowed to return to the upright position. It should take about four to six seconds to do this and this time is used as a guide to the response of the rig when moving.

A shorter time gives more control for novice users but also means less damping effect. A longer time means smoother movements - less reaction to starts and stops, but requires expert handling to achieve it. This is where you discover if your balancing efforts have been successful as the camera SHOULD return to the vertical position perfectly aligned. If it leans one way or the other then it is out with the post-it notes again and more tweaks on the knurled knobs.

Vesting up

JR...With the sled and camera in perfect harmony the rig is parked off on the C-Stand - a wide based tripod - whilst you get the vest on. The Cordura vest is built to a very high standard and is extremely well tailored and comfortable in use. It comes in one of four sizes (Steadicam themselves only supply two vest sizes). Ratchet buckles at the waist and under the arms provide a fast and secure fit. The cut allows for comfortable movement from standing, down to a squat and the top half also takes into account the female form. Whether you prefer keeping the arm on your dominant side or if you prefer to swap it - the choice is yours. Four screws are all that stand between you and swapping sides, or raising/lowering the arm connection point.

Attaching the arm to the vest is simple as you have two thumbscrews that need minimal effort to lock it in place. If you find that when set up, the sled has a tendency to move toward or away from you then these same two screws can be adjusted to bring the arm up to a more neutral position. The only problem with this method is that there are no markings to indicate to what degree you might have made an adjustment. So every time you attach the arm you need to re-establish that neutral point. Again some form of calibrated scale would have been very useful here.

Ready to go

Ok, so the sled is balanced and the vest and arm are fitted - how does it feel?... Surprisingly comfortable. Weight is something that Easy Steady are proud of keeping to a minimum, with the Kit Free weighing in at under 10kg (22lbs). Of course depending on your camera and



setup you could still be carrying about 15-20kg (33-44lbs), and after a while your legs will remind you of that fact.

Once you are ready to go the first thing you find is that you instinctively move your upper body to keep the camera in balance. Indeed as you become more accustomed to the Easy Steady the more you realize that the rig dictates your posture and not the other way around. You react as you move to keep the camera from flying away from you and as a result the rig becomes an extension of your own body working in harmony with it.

Practically, as an operator, if you want to concentrate just on framing then an assistant watching your step is essential. The design of the kit allows for front tracking shots to be taken without the operator walking backwards but your attention cannot always be on obstacles and tripping hazards – chances are if you are watching the monitor, you won't be watching your feet, so it is really a two man iob.

Switching from front to back walking shots is simply a matter



of reversing the monitor at the base of the sled and spinning the camera, but as this upsets the balance of the rig it is not something to undertake lightly as re-balancing takes time.

Putting it to task

CR... As we were going to be taking the Easy Steady away with us after our initial training session, Riccardo, himself an experience steadycam operator, offered to set up our own camera on the Easy Steady and balance it for us. To give us a bit of an advantage later, when we would have to do this without his help, I used my little FlipCam to record the entire balancing procedure. I was surprised when we played back the recording the next day to discover that it had taken him only six and a half minutes from start to finish.

Our own efforts were a little less successful but we did manage to get it down to about eight minutes by the time it was due to return the rig. Not bad!

But what about results? We used two local events and a shoot at a fire and rescue unit to give the Easy Steady a workout.

Two were in crowded public places with the usual logistic and health and safety problems and the other involved a lot of fast tracking and movement. Picture stability was uniformly rock solid and extremely smooth on all but a very few shots - usually the unrehearsed ones, and we were particularly impressed with the fluid look of the fast tracking shots at the fire and rescue unit.

We soon learned that the best results were achieved by shooting in wide angle with the focus set at mid range as obviously manual focusing is out of the question. (However it is possible to hold reasonable focus when tracking if your assistant keeps you and your subject at the same relative distance throughout the track). To be fair, the lads at Easy Steady have already come up with a solution to this problem and a radio controlled follow focus unit will soon be available, with a wireless HDMI monitor for the focus puller

The shots from both public events were excellent and the Easy Steady really came into its own for shooting both stage work and open air performances. When shooting stage performers the rig's ability to go from well above the operator's eye line to a

low shot whilst crabbing is beautiful to behold! As were the shots we did of street performers weaving in and out of the audience. The combined movement of both performers and camera creates a dynamic that is impossible to achieve any other way.

Conclusions

JR... To sum up: Easy Steady has succeeded in producing a rig capable of giving the competitors a smooth and steady run for their money. Fabrizio and Riccardo have certainly met their goals of producing not only a lighter rig than most, but one that is in general at least £1,500 less than the cost of the camera it is capable of supporting. The Easy Steady is a fantastic piece of engineering that is capable of incredible things. There are things it can do that cannot be done with anything less. If for example you want to follow a child on a tricycle through the halls of a hotel (Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining", by the way, was one of the first major films to use this technology) without making the audience nauseous, then the Easy Steady is just what you need!



CR... I have to say that the Easy Steady acquitted itself well in the hands of us beginners. Once set up it was a pleasure to use and produced stunning results that belied our inexperience. The build quality is surprisingly high for what is essentially a low cost version of a very high priced piece of kit. Do not confuse the Easy Steady with some of the cheaper steadycam copies coming from India and China. The Easy Steady is the real thing, designed by an experienced operator and engineered to a very high standard. We were particularly impressed by the quick and

simple set up procedure and the well thought out and rugged modular construction of the system. But it was the pictures from this versatile unit that impressed us most: simply stunning I think sums it up! Colin Riddle M.M.Inst.V. Joshua Richards

Notes: Our thanks to Robert Holland at IDX (www.idx.tv) for arranging the loan of the Easy Steady, Riccardo and Fabrizio (www.easysteady.com) for their enthusiastic training session and Mark Richards of Aurora Imaging (www.photwales.com) for taking the pictures.

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DSLR lens guides:

GAME CHANGER

One of the greatest advantages the DSLR platform gives users is the ability to interchange lenses giving an array of different compositional options and the ability to cope with the wide variety of conditions at weddings and events. Switching from a single lens system, common in a lot of video cameras, is a daunting prospect but doing so gives the ability to release your creative potential in so many areas.

Knowing more about what each can offer, and what the "vital must-have" lenses are, will not only help make the transition easier but will also help you take your work to another level.

Why change lenses

Every good wedding or event film is about storytelling and the use of different lenses in each scene will help convey different perspectives of what is happening and build the atmosphere. What's important though is that its not just about focal length but also apertures, with each lens offering varying depth of field possibilities which can be used for creative effect. The new DSLR platform is well cited for its excellent ability in low light and this is not only because of the excellent CMOS sensors found in Canon's line up of cameras (which have very low noise at high ISOs) but also because of the option to use lenses with very large apertures

capturing much more light in the scene. This is particularly useful in the closing part of the day or in dark venues - and you want to capture the mood accurately.

There is only one option for the exposure program to use when using a DSLR camera for filmmaking and, just like focusing, its fully manual. Because of this there is indeed no other choice of lenses than those with constant apertures. Without these you would have to constantly adjust shutter speed or ISO as you zoom through the lens's range, both of which of course hugely undesirable, as it overrides the camera to close its aperture letting less light in.

For example a 24-105mm F3.5-5.6's maximum aperture at 24mm is F3.5 and as you zoomed it towards 105mm the aperture would gradually close towards F5.6. Lenses with variable apertures are not in the professional arena for many other reasons including lesser sharpness but it's a fundamental point to know that they won't be suitable if you are tempted when filling up your shopping cart.

24-70mm F2.8

The first lens in our line-up is the 24-70mm F2.8, well known as a core photographer's lens. Its a great starting point for DSLR filmmaking before spending some serious money on a range of primes. On a full frame 5DMKIV it gives a fairly wide angle for setting the scene outside a venue or inside where preparations are taking place, whilst also giving a mid zoom useful in unpredictable situations. We actually use this lens for what we call our anchorman position during the ceremony, usually a fixed tripod position at the back of the aisle. Its ideal for this purpose as it gives the



ability to compose quite a few different cutaway frames for the camera that is constantly rolling.

We additionally use the anchorman role during the speeches to serve the same purpose when there is enough light to use F2.8 without exceeding an ISO of 1600. On the latest 24-70mm F2.8 you can also find a macro feature, which is useful for close-up details throughout all parts of the day – another great addition to its versatility.

70-200mm F2.8 IS

The next lens in the list and one of our favourites is the 70-200mm F2.8 IS, which our lead shooters use to compliment the anchorman position. We use this lens completely handheld and hence the image stabilizer (IS) is vital to its operation. This lens gives the footage an amazing feature film look capturing subjects when they are completely unaware it is being taken, with beautifully shallow depth of fields.

With an excellent zoom its perfect to capture close up overthe-shoulder shots of the bride and groom, close-crop frames of the speakers and reactions of the family and the crowd. Much like the highly popular style of reportage photography we love using this lens because we are able to capture everything as true onlookers without causing reactions within people we are filming. For this reason its also a great one to use during the reception part of the day and also for clients who might be sensitive to being filmed - it's perfect for nervous brides at the start of the day.



50mm F1.2

Our absolute favourite lens has to be the 50mm F1.2, which offers an incredibly shallow depth of field when used wide open. Its perfect to use during preparations for artistic effect and during couple shots to totally knock out the background, bringing amazing focus on the subject.



The biggest advantage this lens gives you though is in low light conditions allowing you to shoot without external lighting equipment when you would have previously thought this to be impossible. Its also incredibly sharp and whilst the shallow depth of field will take some practice for accurate focusing it's a must have lens for us. Its price tag at £1.3k will make some people jump - so not a bad second option (at least while you are starting) is the 50mm 1.4 which is under a third of the price and still a great lens to serve the same purpose.

16-35mm F2.8

Whilst not vital for 5DMKIV users, particularly if you have the 24-70mm f2.8, the 16-35mm F2.8 gives a dramatically wide view on the full frame sensor, which is particularly well suited



to scene setting shots both inside and outside venues. It's a lens to be seriously considered though if you are shooting on a 7D as the x1.6 crop factor will make the 24-70mm not be wide enough for most requirements becoming approximately a 38-112mm.

This raises the point when choosing your lenses to pay careful attention to any crop factor that might come in to play if the sensor isn't full frame. Its not to say this is always a disadvantage as often it can be an advantage – using a 70-200mm on a 7D gives an effective focal range of 112-320mm which is great for getting even further away from the action when shooting.

24mm f1.4 & 14mm f2.8

Steadycam use is becoming ever more popular in productions and DSLRs are well suited to this with their compact size. Two good lens options to use with steadycams are the 24mm f1.4 and the 14mm f2.8 giving the perfect perspective of gliding above the ground as the operator moves around. The 24mm is perfect for the full frame of the 5DMK2 but not wide enough for the 7D as mentioned earlier in consideration of the 24-70mm.



The 14mm f2.8 is a preferred choice as its hyperfocal length is much smaller at 3ft as opposed to 10ft, which means when set, everything further from these distances will be in focus. If you are using the 24mm you have to keep everything at least 10ft away from you otherwise you would have to be adjust focus but with the 14mm you just need to keep subjects 3ft away and they will be in focus.

General comments

So lots of praise for all these lenses, which are all amazing tools for creative filmmaking. That said there are some drawbacks to be aware of. Firstly the 70-200mm is large and heavy which can make handheld work for long periods of time physically exhausting. Of course a monopod can be used but we find it restrictive for creative capture. Its also only available in white so makes the operator a bit more noticeable than he would want to be.

Another option to consider is the 135mm F2. Whilst this doesn't have the advantage of the zoom or the greater range it is much smaller and lighter, its finished in black and has a wider aperture so is better in low-light.



Whilst the likes of the 16-35mm and 14mm give fantastically wide shots care must be taken not to film people close-up and at the edge of the frame if being used on the full frame 5DMK2. People can become stretched and distorted where this happens so in situations like dance floors where people are likely to be in close proximity they shouldn't be used. In such situations we use the 50mm F1.2 and also the 85mm F1.2 / F1.8. Not mentioned yet, the 85mm is a tricky lens to use when handheld

as there is no image stabilizer system and camera shake really can become noticeable at this focal length. Only our most senior of shooters can manage it but otherwise we make sure a shoulder rig is equipped.

For event and wedding work we try to avoid rigs as we prefer to blend into the crowd and become unnoticed as this helps the cinematic styling of the filming but sometimes they are necessary. All our film work with the 50mm is handheld and with practice its possible to achieve a very steady shot with only minor breathing movement, which is mostly unnoticeable or can be smoothed out using plugins like Smoothcam in post.

I'll be sharing some tips on rock steady handheld work in a later edition so look out for that article.

Peter Rear PR Photography

Notes: Peter is Focus Magazines DSLR Film Expert and will be one of the lead speakers at ProVideo 2010.

Please visit www.iov.com/ provideo for latest details on the seminars and presentations.





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Now Hear This... Now Hear This!

Bryan Stanislas reviews the Sennheiser PXC 250-II compact lightweight portable travel headphones

We all know the importance of having good microphones and headphones these days. Generally with a camera operator the picture comes first and the audio comes a close second but I always remember what a wise old Sound Engineer once told me "Bryan, if you put rubbish in..... you get rubbish out". That statement has stuck with me over the years and it made me invest heavily in quality shotgun mics and wireless lavaliere systems to ensure my productions have fantastic sound which goes with the great images. Headphones on the other hand have always been a bit of an issue.

Have you ever struggled to hear what you are filming in a noisy environment, I certainly have, from race tracks to music concerts and even some wedding receptions, it's sometimes been an issue to hear exactly what is happening on the end of the microphone. Ambient sound tends to flood the headphone cups in noisy environments, so I end up turning the volume up higher and higher which can lead to serious hearing difficulties such as Tinnitus later in on in life - just ask any old school sound engineer.

In the past I have used broadcast headphones such as Beyer DT100/250's, SonyMDR- 7502 and Audio Technica's as well as consumer types such as Phillips and Bose, these all have ear cups that your ears sit in but the sound still comes through in some circumstances – especially the low frequencies.

After my last noisy filming project I finally decided that enough was enough and I would make it my goal to try out and purchase a set of 'noise cancelling' headphones. I spent a few days trawling the internet for various makes looking at features and benefits of each as well as the all important price.

Settling on Sennheiser

After trying out a few brands at a sound shop I finally chose the Sennheiser PXC 250-II compact lightweight portable travel headphones. These little beauties only weigh 65g and fold down so they can fit in your jacket pocket or slip into your PortaBrace bag neatly.

The PXC 250-II mini headphones come with NoiseGard[™] active noise cancellation technology and with a closed, supra aural design that sits on your ear opposed to completely engulfing the ear like most others and thus stops the 'sweaty ear syndrome' we have all experienced. But, more importantly, the design provides for excellent passive attenuation of ambient noise.



The Techy Spec:

Transducer Principle: dynamic closed Ear Coupling: Supra-aural Frequency response: 10 - 21,000Hz (-10dB/1kHz) Nominal impedance active/passive: 300Ω/600Ω THD@1kHz: <0.1% Sound pressure level: 112dB SPL at 1kHz/1Vrms Passive attenuation: up to -15dB (in the range >1,200Hz) NoiseGard active noise compensation: up to -15dB (in the range <1,000Hz) Weight: approx. 65g NoiseGard power supply: 1AAA battery, 1.5v (approx. 50hours) Temperature range: 0°C/32°F to 40°C/104°F

a combination of passive and active noise reduction which enables the wearer to listen to audio even in noisv environments. The active NoiseGard active noise compensation system is based on the principle of cancelling out sound using 'anti-sound' (phaseinverted sound). Tiny microphones pick up lowfrequency ambient noise up to 1 kHz near to the ear. The NoiseGard electronics use this noise to generate a sound wave which is the exact opposite i.e. at the same level but the polarity reversed -180° out of phase, the effect being that the polarity reversed signal cancels most of the outside noise. This ensures that the wearer hears exactly what is 'coming up the pipe' as it were direct from the microphone.

There is a sound volume roller switch on the NoiseGard control and Sennheiser have conveniently put a small clip on the rear of the housing that will slide onto the grip of most cameras like the Sony PMW-EX1 or your belt/shirt. There is also a small LED switch which controls the NoiseGard cancelling system, when it's switched on the LED lights up red, they have also built

The PXC 250-II headphones have
a combination of passive and
active noise reduction whichin a battery meter which makes
the LED flash when the battery is
almost flat.

The headphones are very comfortable to wear, even for long periods of time and are easy to clean by simply using a wet wipe or a cloth with a dab of warm water on.

In operation

I had a great opportunity to get to grips with the headphones recently while filming a wedding. I was not only amazed at the sound quality but also that the noise cancelling system work so well. I was so impressed I got my colleague to listen through them at various stages of the filming from church to disco and was apparent that these little gems were worth their weight in gold.

The Sennheiser PXC 250-II headphones are priced quite reasonably between £108 and £129 from various outlets and come with a two year manufacturer's guarantee. That is around the same price range as a pair of Beyer DT 100's or DT 250's, but the Sennheiser PXC 250-II have noise cancelling! Now that's got to be worth it...

Bryan Stanislas A.M.Inst.V.

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All chums together

Years ago I used to love watching athletics on TV. Here's an example of how obsessed I was.

Back in 1984 the Olympics was held in Los Angeles which meant that the events were shown late at night on UK TV. But I was commuting everyday from London to Oxfordshire by car, had no holiday time left and could not risk falling asleep at the wheel. So I took my wife and two small boys and stayed in a tent near to where I was working so that I could watch the athletics on telly in the tent (with a friendly hedgehog for company as I recall) whilst wife and boys slept.

But times change and modern athletics doesn't offer to me (and an awful lot of other folk like me) anything like the thrills that it did then. The reasons for this are threefold. The first one is of course drugs. The scandals that later came to light were little appreciated by the general public in the 'golden period' of athletics as a mass appeal TV phenomenon from the fifties through to the eighties. The second one for UK audiences is the relative lack of modern UK superstars. And finally, and this is now very much my take on the matter, the 'de-professionalisation' of the commentary teams.

I tuned into the European Championships this time around and was stunned by the amount of time spent with pundits and interviews with athletes in the TV studio adjacent to the stadium rather than out there actually broadcasting the athletics. Winning athletes may be great to watch but having to listen to endless clichés from these folk who are paid to run/ jump etc. rather than provide endless self-analysis severely tried my patience. And of course the pundits are now all exathletes as are the commentary team

For years Steve (Cram) and Brendan (Foster) have been irritating everyone on London Marathon day with their overlychummy wink, wink, nod, nod style commentaries where even their supposed expertise regularly leads them grossly to miscalculate gaps between runners which are important to the 'state of play' in the race.

The BBC seems incapable of employing anyone who doesn't have the tag of 'ex star performer' in their CV. It's the same in motor racing where for the Formula 1 season we have to watch the spectacle of the ever more self-congratulating Eddie Jordan providing us with a mixture of his wisdom and 'in crowd' supposed chumminess with the actual folk who still run teams. The other week, during the latest Ferrari scandal he actually managed to get a scoop by persuading the Ferrari team principal, after a race in which Ferrari had seemingly broken the rules, to appear on camera to be interviewed but was so puffed up by said success that he completely failed to pin the guy down re the particular controversy in question. It was left to the one non ex 'star' on the commentary team to save the day

So dear BBC please bring back professional sports commentators who may not have achieved the performing heights in any sport but actually know how to deliver a decent commentary. Just think of eg Harry Carpenter, Ron Pickering, David Coleman, Murray Walker (in his heyday not in his later 'should have been pensioned off' days), Dan Maskell, David Vine the list is very long.

Whoops!

Like a number of IOV folk I regularly contribute to the IOV forum, usually to provide specific technical or business advice in response to questions posed by other members. Generally I am very careful to ensure that the advice I give is either correct (if technical) or based on my own experience (if business-related). The rule I adopt is that if challenged I can respond with relevant sources or particular examples.

Technical Forum I recommended a particular piece of kit, in response to a query from a fellow member, which I later realised did not have the functionality that I had claimed for it. Now of course I could have

However the other day in the

(or should I write 'of' in the popular modern vernacular?) simply kept schtum, hoped that no one noticed and that said member didn't rush out and purchase this not-fit-for-purpose kit. But no - as soon as I realised my error I got back onto the forum and published a correction together with an apology for the mistake.

I then got to pondering just how much time and energy is wasted because some folk find it so difficult to admit to their human frailty. How often have you confronted someone - could be a friend, could be a shop assistant - with the error of their ways only to be blatted with obfuscation and tedious verbal wriggling? This can be annoying when it's a friend or colleague, costly if it's a service provider and deadly if it's a politician. And yet it's rife and it seems to be getting worse.

I don't think that anyone has ever thought the worse of me because I tend to own up to my errors sooner rather than later. I remember a high-powered meeting I once attended as a fairly junior participant when the chairman, renowned for his fierce demeanour, rounded on me and asked me how the set of figures that I had prepared for the meeting could be so wrong. My immediate boss looked at me fearfully and there was an embarrassed hush from the attendees. "I'm afraid it's down to my gross incompetence" I responded.

All eyes turned to the chairman in fearful expectation. There was a silence that seemed eternal and then he burst out laughing. The sudden rush of relief in the room set everyone rocking in their chairs and after a minute or two the chairman had to suspend the meeting for ten minutes so that all could recover their collective equilibrium.

After that I could do no wrong in his eyes. But suppose that I had attempted to justify the unjustifiable?

Stuart Little M.M.Inst.V.



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