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Step-by-step guide to creating a traditional TV news package

Follow these steps to create a traditional broadcast news TV story package:

I. Focus

Pick a story focus and stick to it as best you can - remember you have precious little time to tell this story, so pick out a very narrow topic to convey to your audience.

II. Report/Shoot/Interview

Decide what you're going to shoot for cover video/b-roll by asking yourself, "What visuals will best help me tell my story?"

Decide what interviews you'll need. As a beginning reporter, limit yourself to no more than 3 on-camera interviews (unless you're at an event and you just want to get a variety of opinions about something).

Remember, there is a lot of journalism that can be done WITHOUT getting the interview on-camera. Some interviews can be done over the phone to gather information. You may paraphrase what experts tell you.

III. Capture Video/Audio and Log Tape

Capture (import) your video and take notes on what you see and hear. Taking notes is called "logging your tape," and it includes noting where things are within the run of the tape/file. You also may want to make notes about a particularly good shot or other parts you know you'll want to use. You can also listen to your interviews for compelling pieces of information that you were too preoccupied to notice when you first recorded the interview (yes, this happens). In some cases you might transcribe entire interviews.

IV. Writing your Package Script:

You can keep the video editor open while you craft your story in a text file. This will help as you structure things and make sure all soundbites are transcribed accurately word-for-word into the script.

Write your lead/opening first. (To do this... Think about what your best visuals are. Then think about how you might connect those visuals with the main point of your story and why people should care about it. Start writing, then edit it down to two or three concise sentences to get the story going.)

Ideally what is being said and what we see onscreen throughout your story will correspond in a way that makes sense. This is called referencing.

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Write the body of your copy/narration and support with soundbites. Note the duration (in seconds) of each soundbite in your script.

Write an ending to your story. You may NOT end on a soundbite. You may paraphrase something that your interview subject told you or add one more fact that closes out the story.

After that last narration, the final line of your story is what’s called your outcue, standard outcue or SOC. For KOMU, the proper style is “[Your Name], KOMU 8 News, [City/Town where you reported from]”: Lynda Kraxberger, KOMU 8 News, Columbia.

The final step in script writing is to make sure your story is the right length. Time yourself reading your narration, add to that the total duration of all your soundbites, and compare with the desired length of your story. If it’s too long, edit your story down and keep repeating until you know you have the right amount of material in the script.

V. Voicing:

Once your script is ready and you have approval from a faculty editor (not necessary for the 7802 class assignment), voice your story using an audio recorder.

VI. Editing your story:

Import your narration voice track into the video editing software along with all your video clips. Edit your story and **export your video**. Make sure your exported video file is not too big. You should not be saving any video files larger than 50MB to the Classes Server. (If the file is larger than that, you did not use the right export settings.)

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