Practical Strategies for Producing Animated Video on a Budget

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Practical Strategies for Producing Animated Video on a Budget

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• Advantages
• Challenges
• Tips & strategies
• Mobile considerations
Why use animated video?
Making the case
Advantages for Production
Circumvent casting problems
Cast the actors who read best, not who best fit type
Character
6-year-old girl, mixed heritage

Actor
8-year-old girl, ethnicity unknown
Character
42-year-old African American male, overweight

Actor
36-year-old African American male, normal weight
Create appropriate settings
No travel necessary
Your actors don't have to be off-book

Good for non-pros and pros, too
Multiple cameras are cheap in the computer versus live action
Animated video gives you the ability to change camera angles/framing inexpensively.

You can have just a few audio takes versus a dozen live action video takes, or multiple cameras/operators.
Advantages for Maintenance
Seamless content revision
Record a few new lines rather than re-shooting a scene
Instructional Benefits
It's easy to add supplemental content

- conceptual still images
- B-roll footage
- text callouts
Conceptual Images
How much caffeine do you get in a day?
B-roll
Text callouts
More abstract: more relatable?
Shooting live action is specific

Particular people in a particular place

Specificity can be less relatable

Live action starts to show its age (clothing, hair styles)
Animated video adds a layer of abstraction

Easier to tailor for different audiences

Animated video is more timeless
Challenges of Animated Video
It's not all fun and games
Time keeps on slipping
Prepare to spend a lot of time in post-production
Live video production timelines are front-loaded

Time shifts to post-production for animated video
You are the puppetmaster

You have to give animated characters facial expressions, gestures, etc. (Live actors do that on their own.)

In GoAnimate, there's a limited number of expressions, gestures, poses

Have to vary framing, camera angles, insert supplemental content for variety
It's all about the audio
Record cleanly to minimize audio post-production
GoAnimate lip-syncing is based on the attached audio
If the audio level is too low, the characters' lips don't move.
If you have to boost the audio in post, you boost the noise, too.
Try to capture audio close to final quality to minimize post-production
Audio Capture
Tips for clean recordings (on a budget)
Have you created animation for your organization?
Animation Experience
Learning Curve
Audio Capture

Location

Equipment

Recording Tips
Set up for Audio
Location
Recording Equipment
Recording Equipment

($)300

($)22 - 50

($)12 - 22

($)300
What are some ways to improve audio recording?
Lavalier placement

Clothing and accessories

Participant preparation

Devices

Ambient noise
Recording Tips

No touching!

Plan necessary noise

Plan for editing

Give yourself time for takes

Create notes for each take
Talent
The choice to hire professionals
The choice to hire professionals

If your budget allows...

You may want to invest in professional voice actors
Summary: Keeping your project in budget

- You don't need a fancy recording studio
- You don't need high-end recording equipment
- Plan and streamline recording to minimize production time
Post-Production Tips
Audio and Animation
Quick Overview

Audio for GoAnimate
- Get organized/set up
- Listen, pick the best
- Easy edits first
- Improvements/experiment
- Export/naming

GoAnimate Tips
- Plan ahead
- Audio cuts
- The bespoke prop
- Save!
- Two voices, one scene
Audio Post-Production
Tips for GoAnimate success
Why Post Production?

- Organize audio files
- Improve audio quality
- Clean up lines of dialog
What will you need?

- Headphones
- Audacity / Adobe Audition
- Script hard-copy
1. Get Organized
Set up project folders:

- Project Root
  - Audio
    - Original
    - Edits
    - Exports
• Original & Edits folders
• Most audio edits are destructive
• Export folder
• A conversation cut into individual lines results in a lot of files
2. Listen first

- Watch out for:
  - Explosives!
  - Coughing / Sneezing
  - Incessant Throat Clearing
  - Bad lines
(ex)Plosives!

Coughing / sneezing

Throat clearing

Bad lines
Tip 2

Do a dry run

Plosives, coughing, sneezing, snoring, anything that wasn't in the script.

- Listen for odd noises
- Make note in script hard-copy
Tip 2

- Do a dry run
- Bad reads, repeated lines, dramatic...
- Pause
- Make note in script hard-copy
3. Easy edits first
Tip 3: Easy Edits First

• Hummm... the DeHummer
• Click click click... the DeClicker
• The other noise - Noise Removal Tool
Tip 3

Easy Edits First

- Echo

A few notes about echo

- Very difficult to remove
- Gone but not forgotten
- Avoid if possible
4. Make audio great
Tip 4

Make audio great again

• Improve Audio Quality

• Tips from the amateur pros: Mike Russell

• EQ, Normalize, Compress, Normalize
Experiment

- The Effects Rack
- Save custom presets
Step 4

Make audio great again

• The Effects Rack
• Experiment
5. Export dialogue - stay organized!
Export dialogue with descriptive filename

- Project Root
- Audio
- Exports
  - 01_Speaker_line.wav
GoAnimate Tips
Animate your way to e-learning greatness
1. Plan ahead
Draft, get approval, create

Early edits are fast

Later edits are time-consuming
Tip 1
Plan Ahead

• A fast edit in the beginning (SCREENSHOT)
Tip 1
Plan Ahead
2. The bespoke prop
The bespoke prop

- Export prop
- Customize
- Upload prop
The bespoke prop

Screenshot Shortcuts

Win
Windows logo key + PrtScn

Mac
COMMAND + Shift + 4
3.
Two voices, one scene
Two voices, one scene

- By default, GoAnimate wants one voice per scene
- Workaround for multiple voices per scene
Tip 3

Two voices, One scene

• Explain process of multiple audio tracks in GoAnimate
• Upload
• Detach from scene
• Skip
• Upload
4. Audio editing in GoAnimate
Tip 4

Audio Editing in GoAnimate

• Quick audio cuts in GoAnimate
• Retains connection to Character
A note about silence

- The sound of nothing is better than nothing at all
5. Save compulsively

- Audacity, free of charge
- Adobe Audition, paid subscription
- GoAnimate available, paid subscription
Tip 5

Save Compulsively

- Free or not
- Freeze
- Crash
- Restart

Audacity (free)
www.audacityteam.org

Adobe Audition ($20/mo)
www.adobe.com

GoAnimate (from $39/mo, $299/yr)
goanimate.com
Mobile Considerations
Just a few tips
A few tips for mobile

Consider the size
Focus your message
Keep it short
Q & A
Additional Resources
Other Animated Video Tools

- Animaker
- Animatron
- Powtoon
- Wideo
- Moovly
- Biteable
- MakeWebVideo
- Visme
- Explee
Tips for Using GoAnimate in eLearning

Please fill out your session evaluations
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