

Richard Gee

From: Steve King [steve@screentime.co.nz]
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To: richardgee@geewiz.co.nz
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Screentime

June 2007 issue



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Hi Richard,

Welcome to the first issue of *Screentime*, a regular grab bag of ideas and information about the latest in video communications techniques and technology being used in NZ and around the world. These short items are intended as thought-starters, heads-up, guidance, and possibly even inspiration.

Much of the information will be archived on the [FREE STUFF](#) page of the new Screentime website where you'll find even more advice, downloads and reviews to help make your video communication projects more effective. At this time of the year many of our clients are traditionally preparing for 2008 budgets, or revising budgets, or preparing for the annual conference.

Many CEOs start the new financial year by sending a message out to their teams to communicate personal messages of thanks for the previous year, as well as unveiling some of the exciting initiatives planned for the next. Consequently, much of our time in the 2nd quarter is invested helping clients prepare budgets for video projects they'd like to include in the following year's communications and marketing plan. Don't mention it – happy to help.

So grab a coffee, sit forward, free your mind and I hope you find at least one idea to help your business communicate more effectively.

Steve King

Induction videos

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There are many sound reasons for producing a new staff induction video:

- Improved consistency of delivery of a company's induction programme across the entire company.
- A desire to help branch or departmental managers to optimise their time management with regard to induction and staff training.
- Improved induction message retention by inductees.



- Although **the primary and initial audience is new team members**, these videos modules can be made available to existing team members who require training refreshers.

Some induction modules ideally suited to delivery on video are:

- **Company Profile:** possibly including positive client and team testimonials to support the overview of the company and its vision. This can be a more emotive and powerful, visual version of a company's printed and online promotional material.
- **Health and Safety Policy:** correct procedures for safe handling of goods; mandatory safety procedures, etc.
- **Alcohol and Drugs Policy.**
- **Correct operation of equipment and vehicles.**

However there may be dozens of training modules in a company's induction programme suitable for video delivery, so an appropriate strategy is often **to produce an initial selection of modules with which to trial the approach.**

These can be modules which have recently been updated with new information or policies, areas of training where a below-standard level of understanding or compliance has been identified, or modules which will have multiple use – such as a company profile.

The benefit to a company of this approach is that it minimises financial outlay and risk while allowing revised, improved modules to be trialed immediately.

Screentime has over [20 years experience](#) producing this type of HR tool to put to work for your business right now.

Hotel search? Video completes the picture

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Trivop claims to be the first online hotel video portal. The website gives visitors the next best thing to visiting a hotel in person – an extensive video walkthrough. Candid user videos will be added soon.

Website: www.trivop.com

Staff Video Magazines

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Once F08 budgets are completed, it's often a popular idea to use the same medium to **personally communicate the strategy and timeline for the coming year.**

Regular team **Video Magazines** are becoming more and more popular for keeping entire networks informed and motivated, and we've had more requests for information on these over the last couple years than ever before.

Why use a Video Magazine to communicate to your team? Well essentially because everyone in the network receives the same information, at the same time, and in the most visually stimulating way possible.

The benefit to your business is that by using video you can **dramatically increase the cut-through of the messages** you choose to communicate. This in turn **improves the effectiveness of training and support office communiqués** and therefore the quality of service.



I'll feature more information on how these can work for you in the next issue of *Screentime*, but you might like some more information sooner. To find out how *Screentime* can help you get the most value from video communications and achieve better informed teams and higher average sales, then [email me](#)

MP3 4 MI5

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London - The British interior ministry has issued 20 of its top civil servants with video-playing iPod MP3 players pre-loaded with training films to help improve their management techniques, The Times reported on Tuesday.

The gadgets, purchased at a cost of more than NZ\$230,000, are part of a pilot project aimed at providing a more flexible way for civil servants to learn new techniques, rather than classroom-based instruction.

According to the interior ministry, the players can hold the equivalent of three days worth of classroom teaching material, and can be re-used by several civil servants.

"We are constantly seeking to find the most cost-effective way of providing learning and development across the department," an interior ministry spokeswoman said.

"Video iPods pre-loaded with 50 three- to five-minute leadership lessons are currently being piloted with a small number of senior civil service staff.

"As with other modern learning aids, iPods provide the opportunity for flexible learning and the cost is extremely competitive compared with the rates for classroom training for senior staff."

Asked whether civil servants would be able to use the MP3 players for their own personal music or videos, she said: "As with all Home Office IT equipment, the video iPods should be used appropriately, for work purposes, and will be monitored accordingly." - AFP

The CEO Shoot – Making The Boss Look Good

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You're a Marketing, **Publicity** or **PR Professional** and your busy CEO needs to make an announcement on video.

Whether your requirement is for a one-off company announcement to shareholders, or part of a series of strategy briefings to management, we can help.

Your two highest priorities are:

1. Minimal demand on your busy CEO's time, usually one hour or less, and possibly outside 9 to 5 hours.
2. Your CEO is delighted with the finished result, in particular that they're pleased with the way they're portrayed. At Screentime we understand these concerns and have designed our CEO shoot package around this.



The standard CEO package includes:

- Script development and shoot planning assistance
- Appropriate camera, sound and lighting equipment- basically the best gear for the job
- A Director and Lighting Camera Operator, both with calm settled natures, minimising any "atmosphere of

nerves”

- Teleprompter, with the flexibility to amend scripts at the last minute
- Designer background: Frequently we shoot our subjects against Green Screen for later dubbing over a designer background, eg, a company-branded newsroom look, or other relevant scene
- The designer background will incorporate your latest company image. This artwork will be carried out by our dedicated on-screen graphics team.
- A Green Screen shoot gives the flexibility to shoot in any ordinary office location, which in turn eliminates the need and the expense of providing a studio set. This greatly reduces the demands on the Chief Executive's valuable time, and significantly reduces setup costs
- Colour matching between skin, tie, suit and designer background is vital. Colour Matching welds the subject and the background into a single visual unity, without any artificial appearance. It creates a more powerful prestigious look
- The Designer background can be tailored to make the subject look slimmer, or perhaps broader shouldered etc
- Dull teeth can be whitened, jowls slimmed down, wrinkles smoothed. Generally we can take 10 years off someone's age
- Existing video footage or stills can be dubbed over parts of the presentation to add visual relevance to spoken comments, if required
- Time – anytime, anywhere
- Delivery on DVD, CD or web stream.

Visit the [Free Stuff](#) page of the Screentime website for more useful info like this.

Health TV

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Health TV is a channel designed to educate and entertain patients as they wait to see a health professional. It is provided free to medical centres including equipment and install. The channel offers short programmes covering health, wellbeing and lifestyle topics as well as regular musical interludes.

Health TV is narrowcast over the internet which means medical centres receive different programme schedules tailored for relevance to the demographic make up of their patients. This mode of transmission also means advertisers can buy air-time across all, or just parts of the network; for instance in certain geographic regions or in medical centres that have specific demographic characteristics. Health TV's advertising proposition also differs from traditional TV because the audience is what's known as captive – our viewers can't change channel or make a cup of tea during ad breaks.

Moreover, AC Nielsen research shows 70% of viewers identify themselves as the main household shopper and that, overall, 67% will visit a pharmacy or supermarket within two hours of watching Health TV. By year end 2007, 150 medical centres across the country will receive Health TV, providing a projected, monthly audience of 650,000. Expansion of the network to 150 more medical centres during 2008 will see Health TV's estimated monthly audience hit 1,000,000.



Website: www.htv.co.nz

Are DVDs Archival?

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by D.W. Leitner

Consider this: videotapes, both analog and digital, store video in a linear, frame-based manner, in which a discrete frame occupies a fixed length of tape. This means that if the beginning of the tape is damaged, for example, the remainder of the tape usually remains playable.

DVDs, however, don't record video. They're file-based. They store compressed MPEG2 files, which upon uncompression reconstruct a passable facsimile of the original video signal. In a DVD's MPEG2 bitstream, the bit-rate per frame is widely variable, contingent upon degree of compression, with most of the original frames tossed out during compression and replaced with virtual frames (called P for predicted and B for bidirectional) that no longer exist by themselves.

Guess what happens when a file's header is damaged? That hour of precious video, now a single MPEG2 file, goes poof. Completely. You can't rewind, repack, or clean heads. Nothing to "try" in desperation, to attempt a save. The question remains: as media, how secure are DVDs we presently use? Are they indestructible, or do they physically degrade over time, like film, videotape, and all things plastic?

Surprisingly--or perhaps not surprisingly--the answers to this basic question are elusive and hard to track down. Most, even those in media production, don't realize that CDs and DVDs are structurally different from one another in a fundamental way that affects durability.

In a CD, the reflective metal layer that contains data exists in the top surface of the CD, the label side. Only a thin coat of lacquer protects it from damage. Yes, if you bear down with a ballpoint pen, you'll likely penetrate the lacquer and tear the metal reflective layer. Don't believe me? Scratch the label side of a CD with a sharp object. You can see clear through the plastic polycarbonate base of the CD. Now try to play it.

I recently struggled mightily to read a critical JPEG file on a CD-R disc, only to discover on close inspection a pin prick on the label side. Who knows how it got there? For all I know, it flaked off on its own, a defective disc coating. There was nothing I could do to rescue it.

My question is, why do people mistakenly think the clear plastic side of a CD is the side more vulnerable to scratches?

Likewise, the structure and vulnerabilities of DVDs is poorly understood. Unlike a CD, the metal reflective layer of a DVD is not on the surface--thank goodness--but instead sandwiched between two tough layers of polycarbonate.

This however creates false confidence that DVD data is safer.

Did you know that polycarbonate can absorb moisture, which oxidizes the aluminum used as a reflective layer in pressed DVD-ROM discs like those sold by Hollywood? When aluminum oxidizes it becomes dull, like an aluminum pot. Disc readability flat-lines.

More bad news. Oxygen can also suffuse polycarbonate with sulfur dioxide, a common air pollutant that corrodes the silver sometimes used as a reflective layer.

To write data, popular write-once discs like CD-R and DVD-R use photosensitive organic dyes. Sound familiar? Remember those fading Kodak color motion picture prints Martin Scorsese campaigned 20 years ago to improve? Susceptible to color loss over time, with accelerated fading from UV, high temperatures, and humidity?

The same story with CD-Rs and DVD-Rs, although I guess the fact we don't shoot high-intensity xenon beams through them prolongs their life compared to film prints.

But still, I've only scratched the surface, so to speak, of the topic of DVD archival merit. The best, most succinct discussion of this important issue is a 2003 document entitled "Care and Handling of CDs and DVDs--A Guide for Librarians and Archivists," by Fred R. Byers.

It reports a consensus among manufacturers that under recommended storage conditions [italics mine], CD-R, DVD-R, and DVD+R discs “should” function 100 to 200 years; that CD-RW, DVD-RW, DVD+RW, and DVD-RAM discs “should” function 25 years, and that while “little information is available for CD-ROM and DVD-ROM discs... expectations vary from 20 to 100 years.” They also note that “few, if any, life expectancy reports for these discs have been published by independent laboratories [italics mine]. An accelerated aging study at NIST estimated the life expectancy of one type of DVD-R for authoring disc to be 30 years if stored at 25 degrees C (77 degrees F) and 50% relative humidity.”

What if stored under less than these optimum conditions?

While not immortal, DVDs appear to outlast videotape. Only it might pay to make multiple DVD masters, anticipating a future in which one or two unexpectedly turn into coasters.

Visit the [Free Stuff](#) page of the Screentime website for more useful info like this.

Useful words

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And finally, try dropping some of these into the discussion at the next marketing meeting:

mamihlapinatapei, a word from Tierra del Fuego that means “a meaningful look, shared by two people, expressing mutual unstated feelings”

Drachenfutter German word for “a peace offering to a wife from a guilty husband”

shibui, Japanese for “the beauty of ageing”

maya, a Sanskrit term for “the mistaken belief that a symbol is the same as the reality it represents”.

The Yiddish ***farpotshket*** apparently means “something that is all fouled up, especially as the result of an attempt to fix it”

From Howard Rheingold’s, *They Have a Word for It*, published by Sarabande Books.

Congratulations on reading this far Richard. As a little reward, I’ll let you in on a secret. Everyone who clicks to our website from any link in this email will **go into the draw for \$500 worth of Screentime production or post-production resources at no charge**. That could be 2 hours in our corporate edit suite, or a day’s camera hire.

I also have a couple of double passes to any show at The Classic – celebrating 10 years as NZ’s only dedicated comedy venue – so there’s 3 chances of winning something, just for popping by our website to check out our goods.

The winners will be announced in the next issue of *Screentime* in a couple of months.

Steve King

Executive Producer – Corporate Television



S C R E E N T I M E

68 Sale St, Freemans Bay, Auckland, New Zealand

Ph: 09 300 1349 www.screentime.co.nz/corporate

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