

So... you want to make a TV show?

**Good!**

Programs on TV have a very big impact on how people think and feel. Organizations can, and should, take advantage of public access to get important messages across to the public. Light hearted entertainment is important too.

Ok.

**Where do you start?**

In general you need an idea.  
And you need some equipment.  
And a bit of time.

Ideas are a dime a dozen.

Following are a few you might consider, in no way is this conclusive, it's just a start.

**Arts:**

pre-event info  
recitals  
shows  
gallery showings  
music/dance/theatre events  
classes

**Community:**

pre-event info  
cultural events  
what's happening  
who we are  
get to know your neighbors  
PSA's (public service announcements)

**Learning:**

foreign language  
general ed-ongoing classes (for credit?)  
specialized programs: parenting, tax help, lots more  
how to's like how to become a foster family,  
meth news

**News:**

government meetings  
kids perspectives of such

**Other:**

film fests  
short videos  
sit coms  
series

So start thinking and discussing with your friends, co-workers and others about how you can utilize this great medium.

**It's not hard to do once you start.**

Email your questions and interest in producing programming for your organization to Darla (dbayer@bactv.org).

If you belong to a group or organization or are an individual who would like to submit programming to the TV station we want to work with you to make it a reality.

**Now...equipment.** You won't get very far without it.

However!!! It does not take much! All you really need is a digital movie camera, if you don't have one you probably know some one who does that would lend it to you for your project. You can also use VHS or S-VHS, old format but not gone forever, yet. Eventually, Access Carson City will have cameras to loan out, but that will take time and you want to get started NOW!!!!

So, grab that camera and a tripod or monopod and get started!

Of course...you will need something to edit on. There are a few ways you can go with your editing. The best is on a computer. Preferably with a separate large external drive.

We recommend using iMovie on a Mac but you can use Movie Maker on a PC or if you are lucky and know someone with Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premiere...who boy!!! They are a little more complicated than either iMovie or Movie Maker though, so let's not go there yet.

There are tutorials online that can teach you how to use these programs or you can take a class at the media center (again email Darla {dbayer@bactv.org} to get info on classes and their availability).

There are other ways to edit or to avoid editing, takes a little more planning and some monkey-ing around but it can be done straight from your camera into a DVD recorder as well, doesn't look as nice though and we are trying to achieve a certain level of quality here, so....if you don't have a computer to edit on, borrow a friends or relatives. Some one has what you need, the programs come with the computer system so there's one out there you can use. And...eventually you can come and learn how at the center and use ours.

The next step?

**Make a rough storyboard.**

You've got your idea, you need to figure out what you can do to convey that idea through pictures and sound.

Some projects are really easy, shoot it, add a title and any credits and you're done. (Well, actually... you've got two more steps after that, burn a dvd and deliver it to Access Carson City at 511 W. King St in Carson City). But anyway.....

What's a storyboard?

Take some paper and divide it into squares. In the first square write your title. In the last square (maybe 2 or 3 papers away) write THE END. Now fill in the blanks with what you want to convey. You may need to cut those squares apart and rearrange them, you can do this on a computer too or use 3x5 cards, whatever you are comfortable with. Draw simple pictures of what you want the show to look like, close ups of interviewed people, who are they? Does it

make sense to put that person at the beginning or the end of the show? Do you need charts or still photos? Draw those in too, on separate squares or cards. Plan the whole thing out. You don't have to get too meticulous, just an idea of where you want to go.

Once you have your storyboard arranged the way you want it look at the people or events you need to film. Start making a list of what might need to be collected, props, costumes? People? Still photos? Charts? Can you get these things from the organization you are working with? Or from copyright free sources?

**Get out your calendar and start arranging dates to do your filming.**

Buy some mini dv tapes if that is the kind of media your camera uses (Costco has really good prices). Make sure your batteries are charged up or that you have power you can use and maybe an extension cord?

When I go out on a shoot I usually have the following in my bag:

Kleenex (that was a REALLY touching performance)

Camera

Batteries and/or power plug and extension cord

Tapes

Tripod or monopod (I REALLY like a monopod for occasions where you want different shots and close ups from afar or overhead shots, in case you are at the back of a room)

Pen or pencil and a pad of paper

Release forms

Copy of storyboard

External mic (the consumer grade cameras were never really intended for TV production, a good external mic is really nice, but if none available, so be it, you might get one later)

Headphones or earphones if you have an external mic

Later on you might consider:

Powdered paper slips (for shiny noses)

Gum (this is a SUPER long shoot!)

Bottle of water

Throat lozenges (nothing worse than the camera man with a tickle in his throat)

Coins to tighten the tripod head onto the camera

On the day of your first shoot don't forget to check your checklist and take all you need. It just makes for a more relaxed shoot if you don't have to go running home for something.

**Once you are there you need to start checking for a few things.**

First, if this pertains to your shoot, get permission. Be polite and ask if someone minds if they are on TV. State your intentions of submitting to a local access station. Generally you don't have to ask a whole audience, but if you focus in on anyone in particular, before, during or after the performance, get the permission at the end before they leave, it's just common courtesy.

What's the best place to film from? Are you out of everyone's way? Does it have light behind some ones head? Can this be avoided? Are there things over the heads or "going thru" the heads of the stars of your show? Look at what you will see on film, is that an arrow going through her head? Is that a chandelier too close? What about that chair rail, should your actor stand instead of sit? Use your vision to make adjustments to the angle you will shoot from, watch out for reflections, you don't really want to be filming yourself filming do you? And what about that sunshine in his glasses?

Before you go out and shoot watch some TV. Look objectively at the shots that professionals use. If it's close in is the interviewee centered? Or off to a side? Never film a computer or TV screen, it does this weird moire effect and distracts from your topic.

Be sure to get permission to use things. Still photos, music and even faces are protected. Use copyright free materials whenever you can and get permission if they are not copyright free. Also, get permission from your actors or event organizer, especially minors, get parental permission slips stating it is ok to use that kid on TV, we have a form on our website you can download to use ([www.bactv.org](http://www.bactv.org)).

You've got your angle, now set your white balance. Read your owners manual on how to do this, but basically you focus in on a nice big piece of white (I use the inside lid of my camera bag), this should be located at the main filming spot, right in front of someone's face is good, set your white balance to HOLD or whatever your cameras function is for white balance. It's important to do this so your whites will be white, your focus will benefit from this as well.

If you have an external mic plug it in and TURN IT ON. Check for sound in your headphones. I like to keep monitoring this throughout my shoot cuz sometimes things happen. And there's nothing more useless than video without sound. Good sound is important cuz it's not just what you are seeing. We'll cover this when we get to editing too, but start considering what kind of music you might want underlying your show, of course if you are filming a band concert you are set (or a live performance of what ever).

**Time to shoot?** Ok, turn on the camera. You've practiced doing zooms in and out right? Nice and slow, easy does it, smooth is good.

The mini dv tapes last one hour. If the event you are filming is longer there will usually be an intermission. Or if you are making a show that will need lots of edits you are safe. But be aware you may have to change your tape at some point, have a spare open and ready, it's best too if you would label the tapes you are using right away. I like to label them with the camera number and tape number (first, second, third) if I am using more than one camera.

Shoot lots of footage, these tapes can be reused so there's no waste and it's easier to film ALL you need when your people are there than trying to get them together again at a later date. Refer to your storyboard, make sure you got the shots you planned. Throw in a few extras that the site lends itself to, you don't have to follow your storyboard exactly, improvising is good, too.

Remember to get a little ambience footage too, this can be used in many different shows, as your title backgrounds or just to "place" your program.

**Get it all filmed? Good! You're on the road to having a finished product!**

Turn your camera off and don't forget the mic too, don't waste the batteries. Make sure all those tapes are labeled and all the releases you might need have been signed, that cute little girl dancing in the corner might be your main focus during a scene, it'd be a shame if you couldn't use her. (sometimes people don't want their kids seen on TV for fear of someone else seeing their kid, it happens, so BE SURE to get those releases!)

Now, grab all your stuff and go home to edit! Well, maybe not NOW..... but soon!

**Alright, that was exhausting... a few days have gone by and your tapes are staring you in the face asking when?!?!**

If you are using a computer to edit, and I hope you are, plug the camera into power (power first, then camera so you avoid spikes), plug the firewire or usb plug into your computer and then your camera, open the software and have at it. Using VHS or S-VHS? You may need to use one of our analog converters, call us (882-8900).

I can't explain it all here, you'll have to use tutorials or take a class. But here are some tips on making your program nice for TV viewers.

When ever you are making cuts and it's a person, try not to make them look stupid, close their mouth and open their eyes before that cut, you'll have happier actors in the long run.

Use transitions where needed, but don't go overboard, I know that spin effect looks really cool, but does it apply to your topic or theme?

Consider using titles, lower thirds are nice to show someone's name who might have been interviewed, leave it on long enough for a slow reader to read it but you don't need it to be there the next time that person is seen, we've met them already.

**Almost finished? How long is it?** We prefer a piece to be 28 or 29 minutes or 58 or 59. If you're just going over, go back and tighten up some of those edits, your program will almost always look better for a few fine tuned edits and it can reduce your piece to just the right length.

Not quite up to 28 minutes? Stretch those credits, but not so they are interminable. But you can add little bits to get up to 28, 27 is ok, 25 even. Or if you prefer to make little shows we can use 15 minutes. Or of course psa's are usually 30 seconds in length but can be anywhere from 15 seconds to 5 minutes.

When you've got it all edited add some music, don't even try until you are done, once the music is in though listen to it, you don't want to over power anyone talking or conflict with other sounds. Most software can raise and lower the sound at times that are appropriate. Hey...it's fun, play with it, you'll be amazed at how some good, copyright free, music really adds to your final work. And a few sound effects are nice depending on your project as well.

**Now, burn your dvd.** Usually you will have to output or export as a quicktime file and then drop it into a dvd writing program. If you have choices do a first play or no delay burn, it's easier for us at the station to not have to edit off your color bars or delays and if you've watched any TV you know you don't want the screen to go black for long, so no delays.

Label your dvd either with a computer printed label made specifically for dvds or use a pen made for marking on cds and dvds, sharpie is good. DO NOT use a ballpoint pen or pencil, this can render your dvd useless as it can scratch the fragile surface. And DO NOT place small labels directly on the dvd, this can damage our equipment.

**When labeling your dvd what we need is:**

The title of your show or the series name and episode title.

Your name and phone number.

The length of the program.

**Now... get in your car and drive on down to 511 W. King St in Carson City to deliver your new program, how exciting!!!**

If no one is there you can call Darla at: 883-9351 or 830-7939 (unless it's the middle of the night, don't forget even though I MAY be up editing... I like to get my sleep too).

**Finally, here is a simplified version of the above to use as a checklist (see how fast you are getting through the procedure?)**

- Idea
- Storyboard
- Schedule
- Film
- Edit
- Burn
- Deliver

