Low & No Cost Tools for Visual Communications

A Training Webinar for
Iowa Partnerships for Success
Bureau of Substance Abuse
Division of Behavioral Health
Iowa Department of Public Health
with
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Low & No Cost Tools for Visual Communications

Why is visual communication so important to the work of prevention?

The most important reason is – drum roll – data tells us it works – BIG. Let me give you the science first, then the data about how its working.

- People are most likely to recall about 10% of the information they hear three days later BUT take that same info and pair it with a relevant image and people can recall 65% of the info three days later. ([Source](#))
- Pictures beat text because text is so inefficient for us. Our brain sees words as lots of tiny pictures so it has identify certain features of the letters in order to read them. It takes longer and its more cognitive load heavy. According to Medina, Vision trumps all other senses. ([Source](#))
- Tweets with images receive 150% more retweets than those without images. ([Source](#))
- Articles with an image every 75-100 words received double the social media shares as those with fewer images. ([Source](#))
- Facebook posts with images see 2.3x more engagement that those without images. ([Source](#))
- 54% on online adult Internet users post original photos or videos online that they have themselves created (creators). 47% take photos or videos they find online and repost to share. (curators)
- For a lot more info see HubSpot[i]
- Video is expected to make up 80% of all Internet traffic by 2019. ([Source](#))
- Four times as many consumers would rather watch a video about a product than read about it. ([Source](#))
- Using the word "video" in an email subject line boosts open rates by 19% and clickthrough rates by 65% ([Source](#))
- Now with LIVE video we are seeing more unusual and interesting activity like Facebook users spend 3x more time watching LIVE videos than traditional videos. ([Source](#))
- 51% of all video plays are on mobile devices ([Source](#)) PDF

The past twenty years have yielded huge strides in what we've learned about the brain and how we humans actually process information and learn. We can apply what we're learning about the brain to help ourselves and those we aim to influence in the communities we serve. While formal learning is a good thing, informal learning may be the single greatest opportunity we have to make a difference.

Because the brain science tells us that:
- 75% of people are primarily visual learners.[ii]
- We retain 65% more of what we see (image/words) than what we only hear (Medina, 2008)
- Visuals communicate instantly where words require more energy and attention from us (cognitive load)[iii]
- **Tip:** *Follow people who share quality information and then offer and share it yourself (curation).*

Why is the shift in technology important? In part because now we are able to:

- Create
- Distribute
- Store
- Track

Where these things used to be in the hands of vendors like publishing shops, media distribution staff, and evaluation staff with significant fees involved, today the cost is within the reach of many if not most of us because the tools are readily available on desktop, laptop, tablet and smart phone.

Images
We all know how costly stock images can be and sometimes they just aren't all that effective. Many of the best ones are overused. But there are options.

1. Creative Commons – Everyone is likely familiar with traditional copyright. Under it anything you create is automatically copyrighted to you and belongs to you. You must be contacted in order for others to use what you created.

   Creative commons is often called "Copyleft" because it provides a method of copyright that doesn't require contact before using the item if the use falls within the creative commons license. When you find a creative common licensed image, just notice the type of license and if it is available for use, all you do is use and follow the license (often requires a citation To learn more about creative commons go to https://youtu.be/HKfqoPYJdVc and/or see this video for specific ways to search for creative commons images at https://youtu.be/9CQ9ks0hXRI
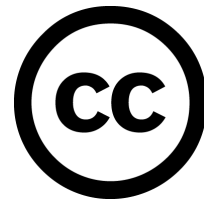
2. **Unsplash** at www.unsplash.com
   You'll find high quality images that are license free, royalty free for your use without so much as a citation
3. **Stocksnap.io**
   This is another source like Unsplash with the same no fee, no license, no cost images.
4. **Pixabay.com**
   This is a third site where you can get high quality images with no fee, no license and no cost. Notice the creative commons copyright on this site since you'll want to stay within the guidelines.

Now, if you use these sites here's a few tips.
1. Create an account on the site which will allow you to favorite the images you use so you can come back to them as/if needed.
2. Copy the direct link to the image and then If you right click the image on your computer you can add the direct link to the info on the image. This can be helpful later when you want to reuse or share the image.
3. Or you can also establish a folder for each source e.g., Unsplash, Pixabay, etc. and keep images from those sources in those folders. Tag them with keywords if you want them searchable and/or rename the file according to what the image represents e.g., mountainscape, oceanwave, etc.

How to resize?

There's a handy little site at www.shrinkpicture.com where you can upload an image, set the size and it will resize it for you. You then download the image to your desktop or folder. You can reduce by percentage or establish the pixel size.

Even **PowerPoint** or **Keynote** can help you with sizing and framing an image that you can then save either as a slide or use something like **Snagit** (for the PC) or **SnapzPro** (on the Mac) to screen grab it in the size you want.

Now, there's an easier way.

Canva.com
Canva has a huge selection of presized setting to select from that can help you quickly and efficiently prepare visual content. They also have an app for your smart phone/tablet.

Picstitch

This is app for a smart phone that lets you combine pictures and/or pictures and video for social sharing. It is available for both the iOS and Android.

Color Splash

This is an interesting app because it helps you highlight specific colorful content. You take a color photo and it turns it into a black and white image. Then you reveal the color on the part you want to highlight.

Scheduling Social Media content

So, you've made something visual to share, now what? Well, you can make things and then post them or you may want to schedule time to make several things, enough for a week or two or even a month but then what?

Buffer and Hootsuite

I happen to be a BUFFER fan although Hootsuite works similarly. These are tools that let's you schedule your social media posts on most platforms. I've use it for Facebook, Twitter and Google+ and it works really well. You can use it online from your desktop or from the app on your smart phone.

This enables you to batch your social media posts, scheduling them all at once, without having to make time every day to do this in real time. When your queue is empty, Buffer will let you know.

Video options

As you know you can shoot video right from your smart phone. Once you've captured the video you can directly upload it online e.g., YouTube, Facebook or you can use small clips in an app like PicStitch to offer some novel social media.

Animoto.

https://animoto.com/

Animoto runs on your phone and you can use still images as well as video to create short videos. The free version allows a 30 second video. It has built in music so you don't worry about copyright. They have a new pricing structure from $8 to $34 per month for use and enables longer videos as well.

FilmicPro.
http://www.filmicpro.com/
For more advanced video, this little app is very powerful. It enables you to control for poor lighting, blur the background while bringing the subject into focus. It isn't free, the price tag on the app is $14.99.
It is available for both the iOS and Android.
There's a brief and very informative user manual here
http://www.filmicpro.com/FiLMiCUserManual.pdf

What about using LIVE video?

Facebook Live?
As you probably already know you can go live on video on facebook using your smart phone from just about anywhere you have a reliable Internet connection. Of course you'll rank higher in the algorithm (be more likely to be seen and heard) when you use FB live rather than load recorded video.

Periscope is a Twitter live video app/platform and designed for live video for the short-term meaning it disappears in 24 hours. You have your own channel and when you're ready you can go live, do your video. You can download your video to your device if you want to save it and perhaps use clips from it or share it beyond the 24-hour time limit of Periscope.
The app is available for both iOS and android.

Where to learn?

Lynda.com –is a great site to learn just about anything and its only $25 a month (reasonable for staff development). They do have video courses from basic to advanced. The fee covers any and all courses you want to take and paid monthly.

iVideo Hero
http://ivideohero.com/
9.95 per month
I found this source several years ago and love his
[Jules] presence and real experience in showing what's possible. He's give you quick and easy adaptations from the "make do" to the actual tools that help you accomplish the video shoot you want.

Jules is a former BBC camera man/producer who is taking his knowledge and helping people become really good at using the smart phone camera to produce remarkably good video. He has a website and a closed facebook group where you can learn not only from Jules but others who are learning and producing video too. Its one of my favorite places to learn.

Digital Storytelling

The need for developing our video skills or hiring for them is here. People in prevention often have stories to tell about the work and success of prevention. Images and video are key in the telling. But how do we tell a good digital story?

Storycenter

There's a great learning source at
www.storycenter.org
They offer public workshops are designed to help individuals and organizations use storytelling and participatory media for reflection, education and social change. They also have a number of useful tools including the Digital Storytelling Cookbook (PDF) that's only $20 and other tools and resources for helping to tell the story beyond shooting the video.

LiveCreative

https://www.creativelive.com/
This site is chock full of learning all kinds of things but has a number of course related to shooting video. I have an account with them and have taken several courses so I can recommend them with confidence.

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[i] 42 Visual Content Marketing Statistics You Need to Know in 2017, Hubspot

[ii] Medina, John (2008). Brain Rules: 12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home and school.

[iii] Clark, Ruth and Kwinn, Ann (2007). The New Virtual Classroom: Evidence-based Guidelines for Synchronous e-Learning.