

CSS Master's Project 3-Minute Videos: Overview & Guidelines

Overview

The 3-minute video is your opportunity to showcase your project, accomplishments, and learning. It challenges you to clearly and concisely describe and position your accomplishments – including specifics, such as design, application(s), etc. – to an interested audience of peers, faculty, and future CSS MS students.

Essentially, the video requires you to boil down your project to 3 minutes, and still be clear and compelling. (The project paper, the presentation, and the video all cover the same material, but at different scales.) This boiling down involves some of the skills of an “elevator pitch” explaining your work and expertise to a manager, a prospective employer, or potential investors.

Finally, your video may be posted on the CSS website, so it should represent the CSS Division and the CSS MS program.

Guidelines

This section enumerates a set of guidelines for you to consider when creating your project video. Work with your committee on finding the structure and flow that works best for your project.

Tell a Story. As in your presentation, effective videos comprise an arc, with a beginning-middle-end structure. Note that, except for the first and last bullet in this section, the other contents may appear in the order most appropriate to your project.

- *Begin with your motivation*, your personal story; what initially interested and engaged you about your project? (10-15 seconds).
- Define the problem space of your project; this may include the stakeholders, beneficiaries, and/or applications (~ 10 seconds).
- Position your project; for instance, briefly talk about the state of the art into which you inserted yourself, which your project aimed to improve. How does your approach differ from existing and related approaches?
- Present your method and/or design (this may overlap with the preceding bullet, or you may combine these).
- Clearly present 1-2 key decisions you made during this project.
- Present your results in the context of your quality criteria and evidenced by metrics.
- Don't shy away from discussing problems, surprises and new opportunities, twists. These are part of the story.

- Address future directions: Now what? How can you and others build on or improve your work?
- *End with your personal take-away:* What did you learn by doing this project? Why are you now a Master of Science? What did you get from the CSS MS project? (~10 seconds)

Incorporate moving images. A primary purpose of the video is to show *behavioral* characteristics of the system *in operation*. This provides compelling evidence of your accomplishment. Look for opportunities to include video clips and or animations.

Use graphics. As a video, the visual component is important. Diagrams, charts, screen shots, etc. are critical (in many cases, you can take these right from your project paper or presentation slides). Anything – photos, illustrations, drawings, etc. – that helps to provide visual cues for the context of your project also helps to enliven your video.

Show yourself. The beginning and the end of the video are good spots to move out of the slides-plus-voiceover mode. Viewers like to see the person behind the voice, since this video is about you and your accomplishment.

Define terms. Consider your audience and define specialized terms as necessary. Avoid undefined jargon.

Write a script – and practice it. A poor delivery distracts and detracts from your project, no matter how good it is. Type up a script and practice it multiple times, to get familiar and comfortable with it. As you practice, time yourself. (Tip: Reading the script out loud is an excellent way to hear awkwardness, gaps, and errors that you would not otherwise catch.)

Resources/Support

UWB's Open Learning Lab (UW2-104) offers 1-on-1 tutoring in media production software:

- <http://www.uwb.edu/learningtech/digital-media/digital-media-services>

Here's the link to their Tutorial Repository:

- <http://www.bothell.washington.edu/learningtech/digital-media-lab/tutorials>

The UWB library IT desk (LB2-218; 425-352-3456) loans video cameras to students for their course projects. (M-TH 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; F 8-5; S 9-5):

- <http://www.uwb.edu/it>

Additional Science Video Resources:

- Smithsonian Museum: <http://www.ssec.si.edu/blog/science-videos#.VUjpRZNcCQI>
- Science Online: <http://dc.scienceonline.com/2014/09/24/sciodc-7-videos-and-scicomm/>