

TREASURE VALLEY
COMMUNITY TELEVISION

TVCTV 101 Training Manual

May 2006

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

In your excitement, you might be tempted to leap right into production before you've decided just what you want your program to be or do, or exactly how you plan to go about making it. This can lead to false starts, confusion, and wasted energy.

It is much wiser to clarify your thoughts and put them down on paper before rushing into production. The following steps to a finished program can be used as a guideline to keep your production moving smoothly.

1. *Brainstorm.*
2. *Research.*
3. *Write a treatment.*
4. *Write a script.*
5. *Plan and schedule.*
6. *Scout your location and plan equipment.*
7. *Reserve equipment and find crew.*
8. *Rehearse.*
9. *Find sponsors.*
10. *Shoot the program.*
11. *Get releases.*
12. *Be ethical.*
13. *Honor copyrights.*
14. *Reserve edit time and edit.*
15. *Schedule your program for cablecast.*
16. *Publicize your program.*

I. BRAINSTORM

A 30 minute or even an hour-long program gives you only a short time to transmit your ideas. And when people watch television, they expect to be entertained. Remember, you are not just explaining. You are combining images and sounds to create a piece that your audience will experience for a very short time. First you'll want to figure out certain things:

IDEAS

What main ideas will the program include?

AUDIENCE

Who is your audience? For example, do you want to address "recent immigrants to the community" rather than "long-term residents of the community" or both? What do the people in your audience already know about your subject? What might make them want to know more?

OBJECTIVES

What are your objectives? Do you want to inform people? Stir up discussion? Increase public interest and awareness? Change people's behavior, induce them to volunteer their time? Lobby political representatives? Do you want people to laugh, cry, think about things in a new way, listen and look at things differently? Feel differently?

RESOURCES

How much time and money are you willing to invest? How far can you travel? Do you have access to the necessary equipment? How experienced is your crew? Can you obtain permission and afford the fee if you want to use copyrighted material?

2. RESEARCH

The best way to start researching a subject is to think about your own relevant experiences and ask your friends and relatives about theirs. Other research sources include:

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

PRINT

Newspapers and magazines, professional journals, books and textbooks, grant proposals, dissertations, brochures, annual reports, ads, promotional materials, curriculum guides.

VISUAL

Photographs or paintings.

MEDIA

Television, radio shows, other videotapes or slide shows, archival films, home movies.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with experts on the subject, or with people who have had relevant experiences.

VISITS

Visits to places and events associated with the subject.

PEOPLE

Who will be the most effective people to present your information and ideas? Who knows the subject well? Who can present it in a moving or entertaining way?

If you are making the videotape with someone else who knows the subject, ask that person to guide your research. What are the most informative books? Who are the most informative people? Are there files you can search? Can someone help select the most important materials from the files for you? If you're not working with a knowledgeable person to guide you, try to enlist someone to fill that role.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sources such as opinion surveys and transcripts of public testimony.

At some point you must tell yourself you have done enough research and it's time to start writing.

3. WRITE A TREATMENT

A treatment helps you lay the groundwork before you immerse yourself in the nitty gritty details of the script. It is a written description of how you imagine your finished program will be. In its simplest form, a treatment sets out your program's main ideas and tells how you will show them visually. Or it can be more detailed, describing what the audience will see and hear when the program opens, the sequence of scenes and ideas, the transitions between sections, and how the program ends. A treatment can include a statement of your objectives. It can also include the names of people and places to be shown in the finished tape. Your treatment should answer these questions:

What is the single idea at the center of your program?

What are the three or four main points you will make?

What form will you choose? Documentary? Drama or comedy? Animation? A studio program with on-camera host? A public service announcement? Something completely different?

What moods do you want the program to convey? Humor? Excitement? Anger? Suspense? Longing? Determination?

What kinds of visuals will you use? Still photographs? Artwork, tables, or graphs? What kinds of motion? Will you need clips from movies or old TV shows?

SAMPLE TREATMENT

Fair Housing Treatment
page 3

Proposed Approach

The tape opens with a brief, dramatized scene in which a landlord interviews prospective tenants for a vacant apartment. As each person applies for the apartment, the landlord gives seemingly reasonable explanations for why he doesn't want to rent the apartment to this tenant. Prospective tenants may include: a single mother with several children and a housing subsidy certificate, a handicapped person, an immigrant who doesn't speak english, and a person of color. A fair housing expert makes the point that, in each case the landlord is guilty of housing discrimination.

Interviews with fair housing officials reinforce the argument that housing discrimination has negative consequences for realtors and landlords, as the experts describe the types of housing discrimination that are illegal under federal and state law and the penalties for practicing housing discrimination. Voice-over narration and key word displays may be used to bridge interview segments and to enhance understanding of housing discrimination practices.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

Will you need copyright permissions?

Will you use music or sound effects? What kind? Remember to honor copyright laws (see Copyright, pg. 20-23).

Will you want to distribute the program beyond community television? What organizations might want to see it? How else might it be used? Will these uses affect how you plan the form or content of your tape?

4. WRITE A SCRIPT

If you rarely write, you might approach scriptwriting with fear and trembling. But if you have done your research, thought about the treatment, and even committed some thoughts to paper, then you are already well on your way.

A MAP FOR PRODUCTION

A television script is like a map. It helps you envision your finished program and helps you plan how to get there. Of course, unforeseen circumstances and improvisations will lure you away from your script. But a script helps ensure that the program keeps to its intended purpose, the director follows the course plotted by the producer, the production team knows what to do and when, and the on-camera talent knows what you expect of them.

A *dramatic script* can be very specific, with precise words and actions for actors to follow. Or it can allow room for improvisation.

A *documentary script* can outline specific interviews, scenes, and narration, even specific sequences of shots. Or it can suggest a structure, listing questions you want to ask, points you want to raise, and sounds and images you want to use.

The script for a live studio show, *the studio cue sheet*, can give a very precise sense of timing, with in and out cues for every segment (see The Cue Sheet, pg. 71).

If you want to be thorough, you can draw up a *storyboard*. A storyboard is a visual outline of your program. In a written outline, you list the most important points of your subject. Similarly, for a storyboard you draw (simply) the most important shots of your video. For each shot you can include notes about camera movements, background audio, dialog, etc. A storyboard can help you visualize your video more clearly. Opposite is a partial storyboard for the Fair Housing video.

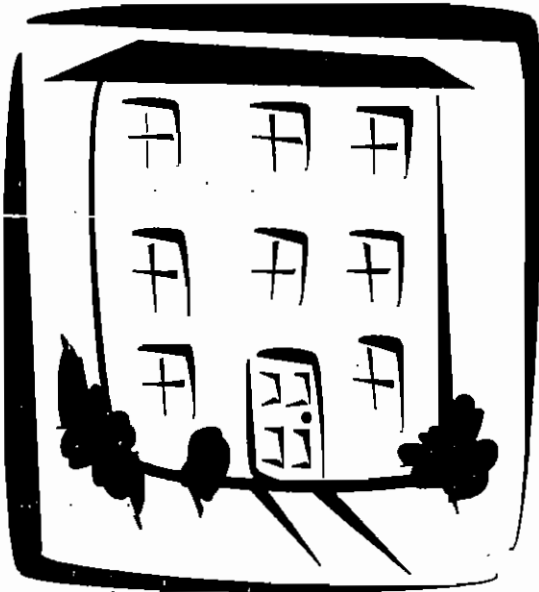
STORY

You want to make people in the audience believe in your program and enter into your vision. A script, no matter what kind, has the same elements as a good story: plot, character, mood, theme: everything you learned about in literature class. It has conflict or tension and a sense of discovery. Things happen. People change.

Some stories hold more interest than others. If you build your script around the big issues of life, you stand a good chance of holding onto your audience:

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

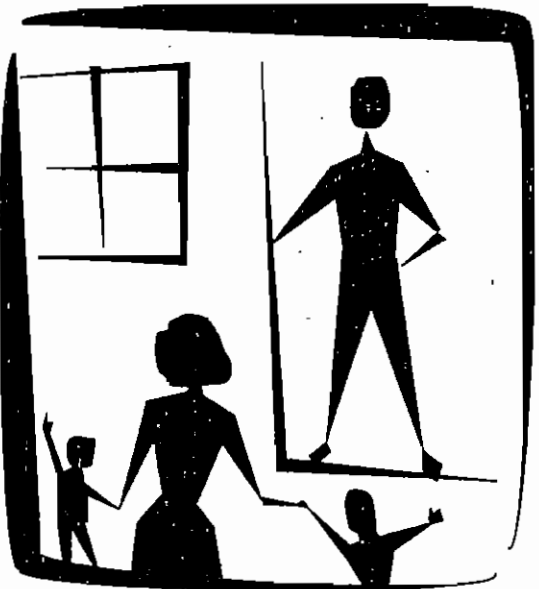
SAMPLE STORYBOARD FOR FAIR HOUSING VIDEO



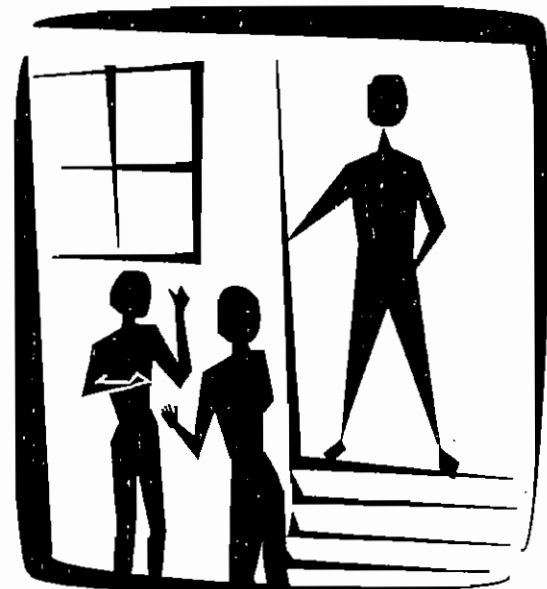
SHOT: LONG SHOT OF BUILDING
AUDIO: MUSIC



SHOT: ZOOM IN TO SIGN
AUDIO: MUSIC



SHOT: MEDIUM SHOT, WOMEN WITH 2 CHILDREN, LANDLORD OPENS DOOR.
AUDIO: DOORBELL AND DIALOG ABOUT APARTMENT



SHOT: MEDIUM SHOT
SUBTITLES OF SIGN LANGUAGE DIALOG, AND THEN DIALOG WITH LANDLORD

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

SAMPLE SCRIPT

page 1

FAIR HOUSING VIDEOTAPE SCRIPT

AUDIO

VISUAL

EXTERIOR SHOT OF TRIPLE
DECKER APARTMENT BUILDING.
ZOOM IN ON SIGN IN WINDOW:
"APARTMENT FOR RENT"

MEDIUM SHOT: WOMAN WITH
TWO YOUNG CHILDREN. THE
WOMAN RINGS THE DOORBELL.
THE LANDLORD OPENS THE DOOR.

WOMAN: You have an apartment
for rent?

LANDLORD: Yes.

WOMAN: May I see it?

LANDLORD: Well, I don't know
if this is such a good
apartment for kids. The
neighbors are kind of fussy
about noise. And it's a busy
street. Do you think your kids
will be safe?

FREEZE FRAME.
FADE OUT.

TWO PEOPLE STANDING AT
THE FRONT DOOR. ONE IS
HEARING IMPAIRED. THEY
COMMUNICATE IN SIGN LANGUAGE.
ONE SIGNS: WHAT DO YOU THINK
ABOUT THIS PLACE? THE OTHER
SIGNS: IT'S OK. THEN ONE OF
THEM RINGS THE DOORBELL. THE
LANDLORD OPENS THE DOOR.

PERSON #1: Do you have an
apartment for rent?

life versus death, safety versus danger, satisfaction versus anguish, love versus the absence of love.

STYLE

An audience-friendly script is simple, clear, and to the point. If your program will have spoken lines, speak them aloud before committing them to paper. Favor a conversational style rather than long, complex sentences. Remember, the audience cannot turn back a page or two and review something that was unclear.

STRUCTURE

A typical program has a beginning that tells the audience what it is about, a middle that gives information, and an end that ties up what has been said: the punch line. In any case, your script should capture the attention of the audience from the start and hold it until the end.

The script might begin with a personal story, a startling fact, humor, a drama needing resolution, evocative images, an attention-getting sound, or a metaphor or analogy comparing something familiar with something unfamiliar.

Draw in the audience by getting them to empathize or identify with your characters. Let your subjects relate personal experiences and reveal their emotions. Show the activities and textures of their lives. Build your script around sections or scenes.

Think carefully about the end. Do you want to give a sense of closure? Offer suggestions for action? Thank

people for tuning in or ask them to watch your next program?

5. PLAN AND SCHEDULE

Plan and schedule what you will shoot and where write down who and where you will be videotaping. You may need to obtain permission to videotape at some locations, such as state or national parks, or private property. Be sure to get permission in writing. Ask for permission for more dates than you will need to shoot in case weather or other circumstances interrupt your schedule.

6. SCOUT YOUR LOCATION AND PLAN EQUIPMENT

Scout the location before the shoot and talk to a contact person there. Find out and write down:

Will you need additional lighting? Is the electrical supply capable of supporting additional high voltage lighting? (See Lighting, pg. 49.)

Where are the electrical outlets? How many AC extension cords, power strips, and 3-to-2 adapters will you need to bring with you? Will you need batteries or a battery charger?

What mics will work best for the event and space? Will you need mic accessories, such as stands, a boom, or a wind screen? (See Audio, pg. 52.)

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

SHOOTING EVENTS AND PERFORMANCES

When shooting an event you should also find out:

Where can you put the camera for the best shots—and so you won't interfere with the audience?

Will the sound be amplified with speakers? Is there background sound that should be minimized? Will you need a mixer?

Will you be allowed to bring in more light? If not, could you tape a full rehearsal instead with added lights?

Can you get into the building or space to set up one or two hours before the event begins?

Remember to reserve all equipment at least 2 to 3 weeks in advance, if possible.

7. FINDING CREW

Before you plunge in and produce your program, think about this first: Producing a TV show is not a one person thing. You can't be in front of the camera, behind the camera, and in the director's chair all at the same time. You'll need to find a crew of people who are willing to work with you, and you'll need to treat them right.

A lot of people have pulled crews together at over the years and produced great shows and wonderful series:

comedy, culture, exercise, music, dance, etc. You can too.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO FIND CREW:

Volunteer on other people's productions, make friends, and ask them to work on your show.

Ask the staff and other producers to recommend good crew members.

Encourage people in the community who may have an interest in the type of program you're producing to join the access center and take classes.

TELL CREW THE BENEFITS OF WORKING ON YOUR SHOW:

Your show serves the community.

Crew members will get good production experience.

The show will be interesting, challenging, or fun.

You can offer to help plan, shoot, or edit their future productions.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

ONCE YOU HAVE A CREW SIGNED UP

Call people a couple of days before the shoot to confirm the date and time. Make sure they can come on time and stay as long as you'll need them.

Talk in advance with the director, technical director, lighting director, and audio person. Make sure they know your plans for the shoot: what you'll be shooting and what you'll expect from them.

DURING THE SHOOT

Be on time. You don't want to leave your crew waiting for you.

Treat your crew with respect. Let them know what you expect. Be clear.

Remember that, just like you, everyone is learning. This means that mistakes will be made. Although people may be nervous, they do want to do a good job, and you can encourage them.

Don't yell at your crew. Don't blame them for problems. If you do lose your head, apologize.

Often you can profit by listening to your crew's suggestions, but if you follow a suggestion and it doesn't work out, remember: the final decision was yours.

AFTER THE SHOOT

Thank everyone. Make sure the experience of working on your production was positive for them.

Ask for suggestions on how to make things go more smoothly next time.

If children or elders are involved, make sure they have rides home.

Let your crew know when the show will be televised.

If you liked someone's work, ask that person if you can call her or him to work with you again. Offer to return the favor by working on their programs.

Be sure to get each person's name (spelled correctly) for the credits.

ON AN ONGOING BASIS

Keep track of the people you like to work with. Focus on these folks and establish good relations with them. Make them feel they are part of your project. Ask them for feedback. Go out together after shoots. Keep in touch with them and let them know how your show or your series is going. Take an interest in their work. Invite them to work with you again. Over time, you can develop a team—and when you need new members you can go back to step one.

Remember, there are other members who have been producing single programs of all kinds, and series, sometimes for years. Find out who they are and ask them for advice.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

8. REHEARSE IF NECESSARY

If your shoot is especially complicated or involves a spoken script you may need to rehearse the talent as well as your crew. If you are shooting a dramatic piece the guidelines below can help you plan your rehearsals.

LET THE ACTORS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

Give each actor a copy of your script well in advance of your production date. Discuss with them the characters they will portray. Explain your mental picture of each character and what makes each unique in relation to the others.

Give your actors time to study the script.

REHEARSE

Studying the script and memorizing lines are just the first steps. To get a good performance you must rehearse.

The first rehearsal should be a *read-through*. Follow this with a series of rehearsals without sets that do not have to take place in the studio. This gives you and the actors a chance to develop the characters and work out—or “*block*”—the movement of actors in relation to the cameras, the movement of the cameras in relation to the actors, and the movement of the cameras and the actors in relation to the set.

REHEARSE WITH THE SET

Once you have rehearsed the script, blocked the moves, designed and lit the set, *rehearse on location* or move into the studio.

The first part of location or studio rehearsal is devoted to final camera blocking, with the director and camera operators working out the final details. Then it's time to run through the program from beginning to end. Run-throughs are the time to coordinate camera and talent moves, lighting, sound, and cues.

When you encounter problems, stop the run-through and correct them before continuing.

Once the run-through is smooth, move on to a dress rehearsal. Treat the dress rehearsal as if it were the real performance. Even record it. Portions may prove better than the final production and can be edited into the finished program.

9. FIND SPONSORS

If you wish, you can look for sponsors. There's bound to be someone out there who wants to donate to your show to help pay for videotape and other production costs. You just have to find them!

Local businesses and organizations, especially if your video is related to their interests, are a good place to start. Call prospective sponsors and explain why they should support your program. Explain exactly why you need a donation. For example, your tape and your set will each cost \$20, so you are looking for a \$40 contribution.

In exchange you can offer to acknowledge their support on air. Explain that your program and the acknowledgment will air more than once (if this is the case) and that there are currently thousands of cable subscribers.

On-air acknowledgment provides good exposure, but it is not advertising and therefore must meet the following guidelines:

You may mention the name and address of the sponsor and a short description of their services. The description may not include superlatives, such as, "the best," "the biggest," or "the nicest."

You may include a freeze frame of the business or organization, but not a moving video clip.

Example of on-air acknowledgment text:

"This program was sponsored by Generous Jennie's Cafe at 102 Somerville Street in Somerville, featuring home-style food and live music seven nights a week."

NON-CASH DONATIONS

Some sponsors may be willing to donate supplies rather than cash. Rental companies or art supply, hardware, and fabric stores may donate supplies for your set. If you are having a reception after a live show, a caterer may donate snacks. A local musician may donate his or her talent and write a theme song for the program. A local artist may loan you some of his/her work as set decorations.

10. SHOOT THE PROGRAM

Set up safely. Run all cords and cables along walls, out of the way of people. Bring gaffer's tape and tape down all cables and stands that people might walk on, trip over, or bump into.

Shoot with editing in mind. Be sure to get cutaways. See Shoot to Edit, pg. 39 for more detailed advice.

REPORT FAULTY EQUIPMENT TO STAFF

If any of the equipment you borrowed was not working properly, be sure to let the staff know when you return the equipment. This way it can be repaired before the next person borrows it.

11. GET RELEASES

Get a signed release from each person who appears on tape. When shooting an event or performance, be sure to get a release from the event organizer and performers beforehand. When interviewing, you can get a release before or after you tape.

If you ask for a release before an interview you risk making your subject uncomfortable and less likely to speak freely. Waiting until after the interview risks your time and videotape if the release is not granted.

You can photocopy the release form on page 21. As an alternative, in informal situations, you can get an on-camera release by having the subject acknowledge on tape that s/he gives you permission to use his or her image and voice in a program to be shown on television. Written releases are more carefully worded and are therefore recommended when working with performers or when you feel that securing careful permission may be an issue.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

Keep a list of everyone who appears and works with you so you can list their names and roles correctly in your credits—and so you can contact them when you know your cablecast date.

12. HONOR COPYRIGHTS

WHAT IS COPYRIGHT?

Copyright is a form of property. The property is not a house or a car, but artistic expression embodied in some tangible form. If you compose a song, write a novel, or produce a video and copyright it, no one can use it without your permission.

If you use or perform anything in your video that you did not create yourself (for example, a song, a dance, or someone else's video), you must obtain permission from the owner of the copyright. Only the owner of the copyright can give you permission to cablecast, reproduce, distribute, or display publicly a video that uses the copyrighted work or any translation or adaptation of that work, whether whole or in part.

Various people can own copyright in different components of a single piece of work. A single videotape, for example, can embody several different components each of which may be separately protected by a copyright. Let's take a video of a musical. Two people may have collaborated on the songs, one writing the words and another the music; these two people might jointly own the copyright in the songs. Another person may have written the musical's script, and own the copyright in the play. The playwright may have adapted the play from a book; the book's author or

publisher would own the copyright in the book. Then there is the video itself; the producer or production company would own the copyright of the video. If you want to excerpt part of this video in your own production, you would need to obtain permission from the book's author or publisher, the playwright, the people who wrote the songs, and the production company that created the video.

Copyright law is complex but ignoring it can leave you with serious legal consequences. At worst, copyright infringement can result in large fines, possible imprisonment, and the destruction of your videotape. At the very least, you can receive a letter from a lawyer ordering you to stop showing your tape.

WHAT CAN BE COPYRIGHTED?

Among other things, novels, stories, books, poems, music, lyrics, plays, pantomimes, dance pieces, maps, photographs, paintings, sculptures, films, videos, and sound recordings are protected by copyright. Examples of items that are not copyrighted are ideas, speeches or performances that have not been written or recorded, titles, names, and short phrases.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

Works in the public domain

You do not need permission to use documents considered to be "in the public domain." Federal government documents are not covered by copyright. Neither are older works such as the Bible or Shakespeare's plays, which were written before copyright law.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE

Program Working Title: _____

In return for the opportunity to participate in the above named program, I hereby grant to:

cable access program producer, permission to transmit live and/or to record for later transmission my likeness and/or voice as a part of the above named cable television access program for any lawful purpose, at any time.

I also authorize the use of my name and excerpts from said program for the purpose of promoting and publicizing that program.

I waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished product or the written copy that may be used in conjunction therewith, or the use to which it may be applied.

I agree to hold the program producer and any cable television company that transmits the program harmless for any liability to others arising from anything I may say or do during the program, except as set forth in a written script provided to me by the program producer.

I have read this agreement before signing and fully understand its contents.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____

Zip: _____

Date: _____

Signature of parent or guardian if
above named person is not of legal age: _____

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

Anything published more than one hundred years ago may have an expired copyright. The tools you need to find out if a work is copyrighted are available at major libraries. There you can access the Library of Congress' on-line register of works copyrighted or check the Catalog of Copyrighted Entries published by the Library of Congress, which is located in the government document section of the library.

Fair Use

You do not need permission to include copyrighted work in your video if your use can be classified as "fair use". U.S. Law says you can use other people's copyrighted work for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research, as long as you consider the following factors:

- *the purpose* and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or for non-profit educational purposes
- *the nature* of the copyrighted work
- *the amount* and substantiality of the portion you use in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- *the effect* of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Remember, you need to take all of these factors into account. For example, fair use might not apply if you make a movie review program for the access channel (criticism and comment for a nonprofit purpose) and in the process you include a short clip from a new

movie that reveals its surprise ending. Why not? Because by doing so you may discourage your viewers from buying tickets to see the movie, thus hurting its potential market, or money-making potential.

Determining fair use can be tricky because the law does not specifically list all the complicated examples you are likely to face in real life. Law libraries contain volumes recording how courts have decided all kinds of specific copyright disputes, including many involving fair use. If you are unsure if your use is fair use, consult with a lawyer.

HOW TO OBTAIN PERMISSION

If your use is not fair use and the work you want to use is copyrighted, you must obtain permission from the copyright holder to use the material. This should be done as early in the production process as possible, so that if permission is denied you will have time to find alternate material. The Library of Congress register and catalog mentioned above will provide you with the address to write to for permission. Copyright holders will often grant permission to access producers at no cost. In some cases, however, they may ask you to pay a usage fee.

HOW TO COPYRIGHT YOUR OWN WORK

Copyrighting your own work is simple. Just place a graphic at the end of your videotape that includes the copyright symbol, the year, and the name of the copyright holder, which can be either a group or just you, and you have a legal copyright. For example, a copyright graphic might read as follows:

© 1997 Sabotage Productions,
or © 1997 Ima Dunn

A copyright lasts for the owner's lifetime plus 50 years. For a small fee you can register your copyright with the Library of Congress. You must register within five years of the date that your video first aired. Doing this will better protect you if someone infringes upon your copyright.

**FOR MORE COPYRIGHT INFORMATION WRITE
OR CALL:**

Information and Publication section, LM-455
Copyright Office
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20559

Telephone: (202) 707-9100

13. BE ETHICAL

Be fearless but thoughtful. Do not be afraid to say or do what you want in your video, but respect the concerns of your audience and anyone you may mention or include in your video.

Videotape others as you would have them videotape you. Try to avoid using embarrassing footage of others. Be respectful when using very personal footage.

Be fair. Edit your interviews if necessary, but do not alter the intent of the speaker with manipulative edits. Don't leave out important information about an issue without good reason.

Give proper credit. Obtain permission before using the work of others. Include anyone who helped you in the credits.

14. EDIT YOUR TAPE

Reserve edit time in advance. Then:

- Log your tapes.
- Write an editing script.
- Edit.
- Add titles and credits.
- Label your tape.

Be sure to include credits or thanks to anyone who worked with you, helped you, or provided material or music. See Editing, pg. 89, for a step-by-step explanation of the editing process.

15. SCHEDULE YOUR PROGRAM FOR CABLECAST

Once your program is complete and fully edited, you'll want to arrange to have it shown on your access channel. Many access stations have different technical requirements and different rules for how programs are scheduled. Technical requirements often include the following:

Tape Format: Tapes must be either 3/4", S-VHS, or VHS. Often there is a Standard Play speed requirement for S-VHS or VHS tapes. Check with the program manager for these requirements.

Tape Length: Tapes must have 30 seconds to a minute of color bars and a 10 second countdown. Tapes must end with at least one minute of black. You must label your tape with the exact length of your program in hours, minutes, and seconds so that the staff can set the electronic timer to schedule your program correctly.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

Single Subject: Only one program per cassette, and the tape must be rewound to the beginning of the program. If you would like a regular time slot for a series, you must discuss the slot with the program manager.

16. PUBLICIZE YOUR PROGRAM

Get the word out about your program. Tell everyone you know about the cablecast. Tell the people who appear in the program, your crew members, friends, family, and coworkers. Then if you are willing to invest a little more time and effort, you can start publicizing your program to the community. There are a number of ways to promote your show. Here are some suggestions.

THE PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

Most access centers work with computer programs to develop a programming grid or schedule. This schedule is often sent to local papers and to the membership of the access center.

VIDEO PROMOS

Make a short videotape to advertise your program (a promo). This is an easy task if you just edit together short clips from the show and add a voice-over and graphic with the date, time, and some encouragement to watch.

FLIERS AND POSTERS

Print up fliers or posters targeted to your audience. Include the title, the time and date of the cablecast, the channel, and an idea of what the program is

about. Make your photocopies on bright paper. Use large type so people can read it at a distance. Try to make it eye-catching, but not cluttered or confusing. Put the fliers up on bulletin boards. Ask local businesses if you can hang your flier in their windows. Leave copies at stores, laundromats, and places where people gather, meet, or work on related issues. Talk to related organizations about using their mailing lists to send out fliers.

PRESS RELEASES

Send a press release to the media. A press release is a short, enticing description of an event that is sent to the press to lure them into covering the event. Sometimes a newspaper will print your press release verbatim as a short note or article. Send press releases about your program to local newspapers, radio stations, and other access programs.

The press tends to be busy and may not read a release if it doesn't intrigue them at first glance. To get their attention, start with an interesting headline in large bold type. Then follow with a very short, general description including the title, subject of the program, and time of cablecast. Now that you've hooked them, add one or two *short* paragraphs with any interesting details or background on the program or the producer, and the exact cablecast dates. Be sure to include the date and contact person at the top of the release.

Send each press release early enough to meet the paper's deadline for the edition that readers will read before the cablecast date.

TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR MEDIA COVERAGE

By working with local radio stations and newspapers, you can increase the visibility of your program. Most papers will print an announcement for you for free, but you may have to entice them.

Check with your access center's public relations or marketing coordinator and see if they have a list of city or county weekly newspapers. If they don't, you can use the yellow pages, the Internet, or simply browse at a local bookstore. Look for the masthead (a listing of the editors and publishers of the newspaper) to get phone numbers and contact names.

It often helps to work chronologically backwards. First, check all deadlines for newspapers and radio stations. You can do this by simply calling the paper or station and asking when they publish or what the standard deadline is. You'll want to make sure that you get your information to the station or paper well in advance of the deadline. Once you have the deadline, then plan how long it will take for your announcement to go into the paper (i.e. one day to read and retype, etc.). Also include in your plan time to follow up to whomever is responsible for the events pages. You'll want to make sure that your information was received and that it is complete.

Local papers stress community news. Make sure that you emphasize the community aspects of your program. You'll get even better coverage if you can tie your program into an article or issue that the newspaper has covered recently.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE September 15, 1996

CONTACT: Cindy Marshall
PHONE: (617) 628-1234

"I MISS YOU, HAITI" TO BE SHOWN ON CHANNEL 3

"I miss you, Haiti," a new 14-minute videotape about teenage poet Margreth Vital, will be cable-cast on Somerville Community Access Television in September.

Produced by Cindy Marshall, the program features a sampling of 16-year-old Margreth Vital's eloquent and powerful poetry, complemented by photographs and illustrations of Haiti. Also included is an interview with Margreth Vital about her experiences as a young Haitian immigrant, and her motivation for writing poetry. "I miss you Haiti" will be shown on the following dates: Wednesday, Sept. 20; Monday, Sept. 25; and Wednesday, Sept. 27, at 5:45 P.M.

Also look for "I miss you, Haiti" at the Somerville Arts Council's ARTBEAT event on September 23rd, and as a part of events being planned for Haitian Awareness Month in October.

This program was supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency and the Somerville Arts Council, a local agency.

COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

You can arrange to present your tape at community sites.

A social evening with refreshments and discussion can generate extra enthusiasm and a larger audience. It also allows people who don't have cable or don't live in the community to see the tape.

DISTRIBUTING YOUR TAPE TO OTHERS

Increase the size of your audience by having your tape shown elsewhere. Often other access centers are looking for good programming. You may need a resident of each town to sponsor your tape. Call each center and find out their rules for outside programming before sending them your program.

Offer to loan your video to groups or organizations that may have an interest in showing it to their members.

CONTESTS AND FESTIVALS

Submitting your tape to contests and festivals can bring you honor, recognition, and exposure. Festivals and contests are often sponsored by access centers, state cable commissions and arts organizations. Some festivals focus on a particular theme, such as animation, gay and lesbian interest, or directed by women.

If you win or are a finalist, cablecast and promote your video again and be sure to mention that it won an award.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Your story or announcement will stand out more if you include a photograph. Take photos during production or capture a still from your video's footage.

STEPS TO A FINISHED PROGRAM

SAMPLE PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

CONTACT: Cindy Marshall

DATE September 15, 1996

PHONE: (617) 628-1234

Subject: **Lead in Drinking Water, Access TV show**

Start announcing: September 5, 1996

Stop announcing: October 13, 1996

Lead in your drinking water is a dangerous health risk to you and especially your children. Many homes in Somerville have contaminated water. Find out how to make it safe to drink. Watch "Get the Lead Out" on Channel 3, October 5th and 12th at 7:30 p.m.