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PostScripts

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Welcome to our July newsletter. It's been a long time since we sent out a newsletter so it's time to catch up. Please grab your PPD mug and fill it with something refreshing then read on. If you need a set of mugs please drop in and ask Sue if you can get mugged!

Descriptive Video Now Available

PPD is pleased to announce that we are now offering descriptive video services.

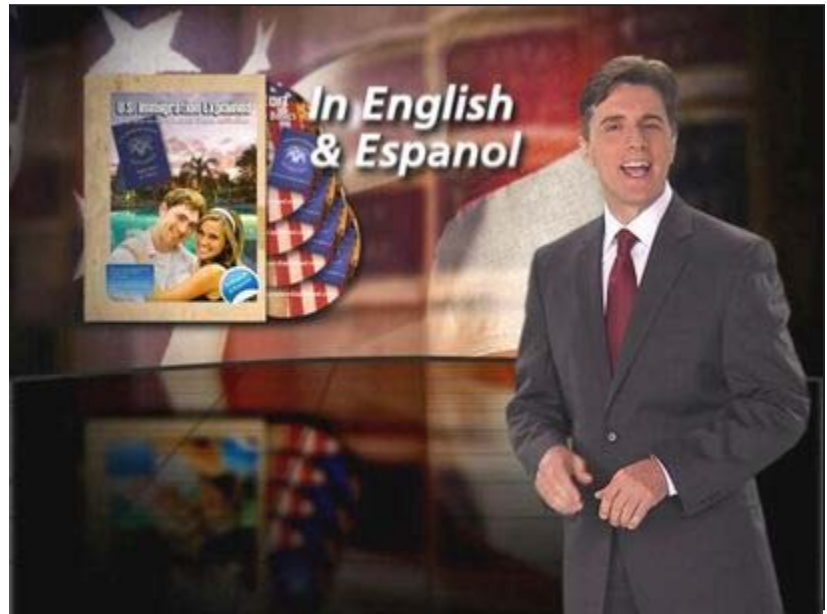
Many broadcasters are now requiring producers to provide descriptive video tracks for their programs, along with closed captioning (which we also provide).

Descriptive video involves creating a separate, mixed stereo-audio track which includes spoken descriptions of the on-screen action whenever there is no other dialogue or narration.

We have just completed closed captioning and descriptive video work on Gina Valle's "The Last Rite", a 45-minute documentary which will be airing soon on Rogers OMNI.

Please call me for a quote for any of our services including closed captioning and descriptive video.

Stunning Multi-Layer Visuals Created For DRTV Spot



Producer/host Tino Monte pitches "US Immigration Explained"

Editor Brian Fearon and Producer Tino Monte have wrapped up another two-minute Direct Response TV campaign for Monte Brooks Productions. The "US Immigration Explained" commercial promotes a DVD instructional manual on how to get a US greencard or visa.

Brian's challenge was to create a visually stunning commercial using only the host scenes (shot on green-screen), still graphics and stock footage. Taking advantage of PPD's many compositing tools Brian used AVID's Spectramatte for an incredibly clean chroma key, Marquee Title tool for full 3D extruded animated text, Animatte Paint for touching up selected shots and Media Composer's Colour Correction tool to increase the contrast throughout the spot. Brian chose After Effects to build a close-up and wide shot multi-layer virtual set behind Tino's on-camera scenes. Brian also mixed the final show. Tino says that "PPD has the talent and tools we need to create top performing commercials & infomercials; it's an amazing post house!"



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Useful Tip: Shooting And Storing Digital Media

As the world becomes more and more digital, media management has become more and more complicated. Here are some suggestions based on our own experience:

- If you are shooting with a compact disk or hard drive camera you should back-up all your media in the field to at least one back-up drive.
- All drives should be clearly labeled with the production company's name, the project name, the shoot dates and the format of the media including the size and frame rate, e.g. "1080i 59.95 fps" (this also applies to shoot tapes).
- Media on the Hard Drive should be stored in discrete sub-folders to indicate project name, shoot date and camera number (if a multi-camera shoot). As a general rule the folders and the file names which the camera creates should not be changed.
- If it is a multi-camera shoot most cameras will allow you to enter a prefix to the file name so please set up a code to indicate Camera 1, 2 etc. before you start shooting. This is critical when shooting time of day timecode due to the fact that the file names from all cameras will be identical if this step is missed.
- Once the project has been edited it should be backed-up to facilitate future changes or revisions. We would also recommend creating a superless, split-track version and outputting it to a master tape. This step is necessary due to the constantly changing digital world. Due to changes in editing software, on rare occasions there can be issues when restoring shows which were backed up before the software changes were made. A superless, split-track tape will help overcome some of these issues.



HD/SD Conversions

Our new Teranex Mini is a powerful tool for SD to HD up-scaling and HD to SD down-converting. We can now take a Standard Definition 4:3 image and stretch only the outer edges of the image to create a very good-looking 16:9 HD image. Although the picture is not as sharp as a true high definition picture it does a great job of smoothing edges and reducing picture noise for those shots where only standard def is available. For an HD project where you need to deliver a Standard Def master the Teranex will produce a better picture than other down-converting methods. There is a nominal charge for using the Teranex but the results will definitely be impressive.

3,000 Commercials And Counting

One of our busiest clients this year has been producer Robb Yee of First Media. First Media is a media buying and marketing firm which handles national and international advertising accounts. PPD is their exclusive post-production supplier for their "Quest Personals" commercials.

Starting from a supplied rough-cut, our editors recut the spots to meet domestic and international broadcast standards, then we create templates for 32 different variations of the spot. Our junior editors then version and output a separate customized tape for each broadcaster in over 150 markets across North America and the UK. Typically this means over 350 tapes with 6 different commercials on each tape for every new campaign. In order to maintain a constant supply of fresh commercials we will have created over 3,000 custom tapes by year end.

That's a wrap for this edition of PostScripts. If you haven't heard, we are offering special discounted editing rates until September 4th; please call us for details. We hope to see you here soon but in the meantime have a terrific summer.

Al Mitchell