Contemplative Practices for a Technological Society: Video

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By
Kyle Stevens
Val Komarov
Yin Zhou

Client
Dr. Douglas Lindner

Instructor
Dr. Edward Fox
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Executive Summary

This project deals with the documentation of the Contemplative Practices Conference that happened at the Virginia Tech Conference Center on April 11-13. The project involved three distinct phases. The first phase was to gather interviews from various members within the Contemplative Practice field living in the New River Valley region. In this phase, 5 people were interviewed. The second phase of the project was to film the events of the conference, while at the same time gathering interviews from various individuals attending the conference. In total, we have interviewed 18 practitioners. A full listing of the materials including the names of those interviewed can be found later in the report. The third phase of the project involved editing the interview footage, and uploading the interviews to YouTube.

Contemplative practices are a collection of various techniques that are focused on the betterment of the individual through various self-improvement techniques. There are various forms of contemplative practices such as Tai Chi, Qigong, Yoga, Mindfulness, and Meditation.

The goal of the project is to develop a documentary on the Contemplative Practices Conference that happened at the Virginia Tech Conference Center on April 11-13. The extent of our work was to generate the content to make this documentary, edit and publish the interviews, and successfully hand off the content for further development at a later date. So far, the videos have been edited and published on the Contemplative Video YouTube channel (http://www.youtube.com/user/ContempVideo), and our professor, Dr. Fox, is in possession of all the content generated by our work, including the raw footage.

For the individuals working on this in the future, the resources available for this project are described in greater detail in the “Developer’s Manual”, there are interviews of 18 people, 5 before the conference, and 13 during the conference. In addition there are many photographs of the conference, various audio recordings, and multiple hours of “Rover Cam” footage, capturing breakout sessions and various events of the conference.

You can find the timeline and discussion of various problems we encountered throughout the project in the Lessons Learned section. Most of the problems we had will not be encountered by future members of the project, as most of them dealt with generating footage.

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Linder and Dr. Fox for the wonderful opportunity to work on this project, and none of this would have been possible without them.
User’s Manual

During April 11 through 13 of 2013 Virginia Tech hosted the *Contemplative Practices for a Technological Society* conference. The videos and documents that we captured and collected serve to document the spirit of the conference and the insight of the prominent practitioners who came.

**YouTube**

To publicly exhibit the fruits of our effort a YouTube channel called ContempVideo was created. That channel includes edited forms of each of the interviews we conducted. The link to the channel is here:

[http://www.youtube.com/user/ContempVideo](http://www.youtube.com/user/ContempVideo)

Each video posted to the channel includes a brief description of the person interviewed. Links to their personal websites or places of practice were also included where applicable.
Developer’s Manual

Data

All data files are stored on the 2 TB external G-Technology drives. This includes:

- Final Cut Pro 7 Project Files
- Raw captured video content (158 GB)
- Audio recordings (1.5 GB)
- Photos taken at conference (10 GB)
- PowerPoint presentations from keynotes (100 MB)

Raw Captured Video

The raw captured video includes interviews conducted with the following individuals:

- Andres Gonzalez
- Anna Pittman
- Ben Knapp
- Charles Lief
- David Levy
- Eric Diogun
- Gyaltrul Rinpoche
- Ivica Ico Bukvic
- John Schorling
- Linda Lantieri
- Margaret Plews-Ogan
- Mark McNamee
- Matthew Komelski
- Michael Carroll
- Patton Hyman
- Rick Bowles
- Roop Mahajan
- Sadah Proctor

It also includes shots captured while roaming around the conference. This includes practices sessions
(such as Yoga and Tai Chi practice) and presentations.

**Audio Recordings**

Audio was captured from several of the interviews we conducted as a backup to the audio captured by the camera using lavalier mics. There are also audio recordings from presentations.

**Photos**

Photos were captured throughout the conference. They include photos of practice sessions and presentations.

**PowerPoints**

PowerPoint documents were collected from each of the keynote speakers as well as from smaller sessions.

**Editing Video**

Interviews were edited into a more consumable form using Final Cut Pro 7. The Final Cut Pro directory on hard drive contains separate projects for videos edited by Kyle Stevens, Val Komarov, and Yin Zhou.

Each interview has been edited to remove moments when the interviewer is asking questions. In place of the removed questions are a simplified version of the question asked using the Arial font at 30 pt. Videos on the YouTube (more below) channel should provide ample examples of the format.

**YouTube Channel**

A YouTube channel was created to quickly release basic edits of the interviews to show to the public and to move forward with transcription efforts. The following steps were taken to convert raw footage into the published video:

1. Import raw footage into Final Cut Pro. If the videos were not in the compatible format, they were converted using various resources at InnovationSpace.
2. Remove the interviewer from audio, replace with question slides instead.
3. Correct for exposure by applying a Color Adjustment effect.
4. Remove stereo sound if more than one source was used in the interview.
5. Export video using the following settings:
   a. 720p resolution @ 29.97 Hz
   b. Highest quality audio/video settings
   c. MP4 filetype.
7. Upload resulting product to youtube channel.

The owner of the channel is Kyle Stevens, but administrative and ownership information will be passed on to Dr. Edward A. Fox and Dr. Douglas Linder shortly after the completion of the project.

The channel name is ContempVideo and can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/user/ContempVideo

Information needed to administer the channel, including the password, can be in the youtube_admin.txt file stored on the project hard drive.
Lessons Learned

Timeline

Feb 8th - Met with Dr. Fox, Joan Grossman, and Parke May to discuss the project
Feb 13th - Met with fellow group members to figure out who to interview first
Feb 15th - Met with Joan to learn how to set up the set for an interview
March 3rd - Conducted a practice interview
March 4th - Interview with yoga instructor, Anna Pittman
March 8th - Interview with Provost, Dr. McNamee
March 26th - Interview with ICAT, Benjamin Knapp
March 29th - Meeting with Dr. Fox, Joan Grossman, and Parke May to discuss the equipments for the conference
April 8th - Interview with tai chi instructor, Matthew Komelski
April 10th - Interview with ICTAS Director, Roop Mahajan
April 10th - Meeting with Dr. Fox, Joan Grossman, and Parke May to discuss the conference in details
April 11th - Pre conference, opening remarks of the conference
April 12th - Conference, conducted interviews with :
  ● John Schorling
  ● Dr. Margaret Plews-Ogan
  ● Michael Carroll
  ● Linda Lantieri
  ● Rick Bowles
  ● Patton Hyman
April 13th - Conference, conducted interviews with
  ● Charles Lief
  ● Gyaltrul Rinpoche
  ● Andres Gonzales
  ● Ivica Ico Bukvic
  ● Eric Diogun
  ● Sadah Proctor
  ● David Levy
April 24th - After conference meeting with Dr. Fox, Joan Grossman, and Parke May
Problems

There were a lot of problems we ran into in this project. One of the problems was the scheduling conflicts between interviewer, the person being interviewed, and ourselves. We had to try to schedule an hour between different people who all had very busy schedules. This was challenging to do during the short span of time.

We also ran into a lot of problems when shooting the interviews, such as audio noise and shadows. While shooting our first interview, we noticed a lot of disruption in the noise quality. After analyzing the noise we found that the noise came from surrounding noise and the sound of the microphone rubbing against the clothes. The first few interviews we conducted had poor lighting.

The biggest problem I think was the time constraint. The project was extremely time demanding in scheduling interviews and conducting interviews. We also had to shoot a significant amount of footage and interview many individuals within two days during the conference. The last issue is that after the conference was over we had only a month to learn how to edit videos and actually edit the interviews. The time constraint was a significant challenge.

Solutions

In order to deal with the scheduling conflicts we learned how to conduct interviews ourselves. This made the requirement of scheduling an interviewer unnecessary, which helped reduce the scheduling conflicts. This also made interviewing people at the conference simpler because we did not need to rely on a designated interviewer’s schedule.

We also had a problem with audio noise. Some of this was due to the environment but the majority was due to lavalier microphones rubbing against clothes. We managed to fix this problem by adding boom mics and multiple audio recorders to record the interviews. Then we used video editing software to sync the video and audio later.

During our first few interviews we had issues with lighting and shadows. We solved this issue by analyzing the video and by trial and error figured out a way to set up a set properly that got rid of a majority of the shadows. As we progressed further on the project we grew more competent at lighting a set.

The most significant factor that hindered our ability to make a great documentary was the lack of time we had. We tried to solve this problem by scheduling interviews before the conference and
scheduling tasks during the conference. This helped reduce the time constraint and stress on the team. As for the short time we had to edit the videos, we thought that editing the interviews down to short videos that we could post online was the best approach. That way we could show some of the content of the videos to people who want to see the conference shortly after the event. Hopefully this also makes life easier for the future editor(s) of the documentary.
Acknowledgements

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Scott Pennington
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Andres Gonzalez
Anna Pittman
Ben Knapp
Charles Lief
David Levy
Eric Diogun
Gyaltrul Rinpoche
Ivica Ico Bukvic
John Schorling
Linda Lantieri
Margaret Plews-Ogan
Mark McNamee
Matthew Komelski
Michael Carroll
Patton Hyman
Rick Bowles
Roop Mahajan
Sadah Proctor

Innovation Space
The Inn at Virginia Tech: Skelton Conference Center
References

*Contemplative Practice Interviews.* Dir. Val Komarov, Kyle Stevens, Yin Zhou, and Parke May.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ContempVideo>.


