

Green Screen Technology at Crestomere School

Green Screening

Quick Prezi Overview about our Green Screen:

http://prezi.com/60fnicezy1_h/green-screening-at-crestomere-school/

Building a Green Screen:

1. You will need to purchase two large plywood pieces, painted with a green screen paint called DigiComp Green, which is available from Direct Paint in Calgary (403-243-1274).
2. The plywood pieces need to be mounted on a wall in a room that has some semblance of privacy and soundproofing. There should be no gaps between the plywood pieces: they must be seamless. (We mounted ours on the back wall of our stage, which is rarely used and the screen can be covered up and protected by our stage backdrop curtains.)
3. Before mounting, if possible, have someone set up a camera on a tripod to ensure you get the maximum usage of your homemade screen. Look through the camera's screen to ensure the screen isn't too high or low, or that it is too narrow.
4. Don't line the screen up directly with the floor – move it up a couple feet. Position your green screen so that it covers the most horizontal space possible, so you can fit as many students in the scene as possible.
5. Lighting should be bright enough that it brings out the vibrant color of the screen, but not so bright that the light begins to reflect back (this will cause your paler or blonder students to have green skin or hair). Lighting should also not produce shadows on the green screen, or you will have shadows marring your selected backgrounds. (We use the fluorescent lights on our stage – the stage spotlights are too bright and cause shadows)

Green Screen Filming Top 10 Tips and Tricks

1. Do not zoom in / out or pan the camera once filming begins. If you do this, your characters will be moving but the computerized backdrop will stay stagnant, making your characters appear as if they are floating like ghosts (unless that's what you want...)
2. To have a character zoom in, either have them walk towards the camera, or simply do a new scene in which the character is suddenly sitting up very close to the lens.
3. ALWAYS use a tripod to keep the camera steady. Otherwise your computerized background appears as if it is shaking.
4. Stand your actors about a half foot to a full foot away from the green screen to prevent shadows. Never allow an actor to lean against the screen.
5. Never allow your actors to wear light green or yellow – these colors tend to blend with the screen and pick up the computerized background when editing. It looks poorly edited.
6. If you have a surface that reflects light (a shiny table top, chair, or even shiny hair) it will pick up the computerized background, and once again, look poorly edited. Avoid shiny or reflective surfaces as much as possible, and if not, dim the lights slightly to reduce reflections.
7. Any noticeable scratches or scuffs on your green screen should be painted over with the DigiComp Green paint to avoid floating mysteriously in your computerized background.
8. Ensure your camera angle is just wide enough to encompass your actors and the green screen – if the camera picks up any of the wall surrounding the green screen, it will show up as wall when you are editing.
9. Large group scenes or scenes where the actors must move a lot are difficult, as you only have so much space to work with and you should not pan the camera. Try to stage your scenes so only a few actors are in the scene at a time, and if they have a lot of action, use creative choreography to ensure the action stays within the frame!
10. While editing, choose LARGE SIZE images only (when searching Google for background images, select “Large” on the left hand column). Anything smaller will appear pixelated when viewing your movie full-screen. (Also, be aware of copyright laws for choosing background images.)

Editing in iMovie Top 10 Tips and Tricks

1. Turn on iMovie BEFORE inserting your Memory Card from your video camera – if you do this, then the importing tool will pop up automatically and you won't have to go searching for it.
2. Try to delete unwanted clips off your video camera Memory Card before importing (unless you want a blooper reel) as this will cut down on importing time a great deal.
3. Watch some tutorials on YouTube and at the Apple website before beginning – the best way to learn is by fiddling with the program yourself, and being very hands-on! Try this tutorial to start:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q64NAQsoUZg&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active
4. Make sure your “Advanced Tools” are turned on: go to Preferences, select the General pane, and make sure “Show Advanced Tools” is checked. Otherwise, when you go to overlay your green screen video on top of your still picture (or background video) you will only see limited options, and green screening will not be one of them.
5. Use high quality background images or video, otherwise they pixelate, and be aware of copyright licensing for photographs and video loops.
6. Still images look more realistic in the background than video loops, because your actors' motions might not match the motion of the movie in the background.
7. Explore special effects (slow motion, fast motion, visual effects) – if you don't know how to use them, play with the program or search for a YouTube tutorial.
8. Use the precision editor to finely cut scenes and edit bloopers.
9. If a video clip doesn't line up exactly with your background (thus resulting in a half second of just background and then your actors magically appear in the foreground), click on the video clip, and use the arrow key (←) to move the video clip right to the very beginning of the background clip.
10. If you need to edit with precision, zoom in using the zoom toolbar on the right-hand side, directly under the clip manager.

Common Craft Productions:

What is Common Craft and How do I Make it?:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCl1zoxs3Zo&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active

Funny and professional example of a Common Craft video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVnfyradCPY&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active

*Note: in the video, the narrator explains that he narrates aloud while the other group members move the pieces. At Crestomere, we recorded our narrations using Audacity, making the clips into mp3 files, and then used those audio clips to guide our motions. That way, if anyone messed up on the narration, we wouldn't have to restart filming. When it was time for editing on iMovie, we simply muted the video clips so our audio clips, which were lined up easily with the correct video clips, were heard crisp and clear.

** Audacity is a freeware program easily downloaded onto any machine (Mac or PC). Try this link: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> In order to make an Audacity file an mp3, you will also need to download and run this plug-in: http://www.afterdawn.com/software/audio_video/convert_audio/lame_mp3_encoder.cfm There are many tutorials on YouTube that can show you how to use Audacity – it is quite user-friendly and the kids figure it out quickly.

Crestomere Examples (The Charter of Rights and Freedoms):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mmzNv61duA&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ye7PddKv82s&feature=related&safety_mode=true&persist_safety_mode=1&safe=active