Digital Film School
Archive your project

Once you've finished capturing all that great footage and finished editing your mini-masterpiece, you'll be wanting to think about where your media will end up.

There's almost an unlimited range of destinations for you to choose from.

Thinking about the distribution of your project, it could go onto DVD, be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo, added to your facebook homepage, played on your TV, Laptop or your phone. It could even get displayed at a film festival, so you need to be aware of all these possibilities.

When exporting your project, you have to take into account all these eventual destinations. A sure-fire approach is to expect anything and export in the best quality available. However, even this doesn't cover all eventualities... for instance, what if you're asked to remove something in the future?

This is where ARCHIVING comes in. Once again, you have a world of options, but there are a few things to consider:

Firstly, always export your finished project in the best quality possible, and then produce a copy at a lower quality setting if required by your client. A good example is this video you're watching right now. You're probably watching it on the internet in quite a low quality setting, but this is actually being recorded right now at the very highest possible quality. When I hand it over to be put on the course website, I will hand it over in a very high quality format called ProRes422. Only then will it be converted to a lower quality and smaller file size for display on the internet.

Converting to high quality formats like ProRes is quite straightforward in most editing packages, though simpler ones may not be able to.

In iMovie, I make use of the EXPORT USING QUICKTIME function. From here, I can select which format I wish to output in and I can find my favourite high quality output here - ProRes422.

I might change a few parameters here.

And I also want the highest quality audio - Linear PCM.

And we're done.

Once you've dealt with the exporting process, you have to consider archiving your whole project... do you want to keep all those source clips in case you want them again? Do you need to clear space on your computer disks yet? Do you think you might ever need to come back to the project to perform further edits?

You'll also want to consider where and how you want to archive your project, as there are many options. For instance, did you know that tape is still one of the most common professional archiving formats? The Open University has thousands of tapes in their media archive. Of course, you could also decide to archive to a DVD or Blu-Ray disk, or even to an

external hard disk... these are probably more suitable solutions unless you have a professional tape deck handy.

It's also worth considering how easily your editing application copes with archiving. Some applications just can't handle it because they create complicated libraries of all your files. Others, such as Final Cut or Premiere make it very easy, especially through their use of project and media management tools.

For example, here in Final Cut, I could use the MEDIA MANAGER.

This facility effectively creates a new project with all my media collected together. It's various functions enable me to choose exactly how I want to archive my project.

Alternatively, if my project files and my media are well organised, I could just archive that immediately to my chosen platform - such as my DVD drive here.

Whatever your chosen route, you must be careful to ensure you archive everything you need.

One other thing - make sure you get your rights sorted out, as this makes things much easier in the future, especially when you want to re-use the footage.