

Case Study - “Murroe Update” Film Project

Introduction

Dennis O’Malley, a Murroe local, noticed whilst working on projects in nursing homes locally that senior citizens who are resident will overtime become institutionalised and disconnect from the community. He came up with an idea which proposed to counteract this by bringing village and community life to each individual using modern technology to best advantage, maximising the connection through strong visual imagery. A weekly magazine programme would be filmed containing a selection of the following; a thought for the week by the local priest, news of community activities, interviews, clips from all sports clubs and organisations in the community, local traditional musicians, light exercises and even singing lessons. The programme would then be uploaded to YouTube and also made available to download from murroe.net. It was also envisioned that the programme, over time, would be catered to and take in Irish Diaspora abroad who have emigrated.

Activities

Dennis approached the Community council with the idea, which they offered to support with both funding and volunteers. He then approached the Development Officer at the Caherconlish office of Ballyhoura Development for funding which would be used for equipment and filmmaking training for the community. Training, which was delivered by an MA student from the University of Limerick, consisted of four sessions over 6 months, taking in the following facets of filmmaking: Script and storyboard prior to filming, familiarising the group with camera and equipment, recording raw footage/sound equipment/tripod, how to import footage onto computer (Windows movie maker, Apple Imovie, Adobe premier), editing the movie, sorting clips, adding title effects/captions/credits/still pictures, exporting the finished movie, uploading the finished movie to YouTube and burning DVD’s. The equipment required were: Cameras/tripods/microphones/editing software.

He also approached the Tús supervisor with an application requiring 2 Tús workers to help get the project off the ground, and its continual progression. One Tús worker was initially taken on and partook in the training, another Tús participant then joined a few weeks later. Their previous work histories included a combination of I.T, web design, programming and Film making/editing, so both were an excellent fit into the project and hit the ground running.

Lessons Learned

The following comes from the group’s strategic plan, a blueprint document that they are currently drafting. Once finalised, it will be made available to other groups interested in setting up such a project.

- Communication with team members is critical, especially given that most of the work is done by individuals operating at remote locations.
- It is essential that all team members have good and reliable internet access, and ideally a computer powerful enough to run Nero editing software, (exporting a 40 minute video clip

can take 4 hours, or 1 hour, depending on the computer. If a mistake is seen in the final edit it has to be redone, and so 4 hours becomes 8 hours, and so on.

- It is essential to have a central meeting point/studio. This is where editors and film maker's activities are discussed and agreed, and continuity filming and final editing is done. Things can be discussed in person in a way that they cannot be discussed online. It also serves as a meeting place for guest speakers / industry experts who might offer their advice/services.
- Regarding activities in the studio, a check list has been drawn up for filming of interviews and continuity pieces, which includes positioning of light, microphone, camera, where the speaker should look, dealing with retakes/missed cues/missed lines, countdown to 'action'. A further checklist has been drawn up for out-of-office filming such as which substantially covers lighting, camera angles, wide angle outdoor view to set / establish broad context, introducing interviewee through a short clip, and additional clips apt to establishing context and background of the interviewees environment.
- Organisation of content is key to the continuance of the project. Given that volunteers are offering their time for free it helps greatly to give them as much notice as possible to make sure they will be available on the given day/time/location. Ditto for interviewees. Four weeks forward planning should not be considered too much.

Success

The programme is currently watched and eagerly anticipated every fortnight in 6 nursing homes in the Limerick region. A member of staff rolls the TV into the seating area, where it is then watched and discussed in great detail by all of those in attendance. It has also had views on-line from the following countries: Czech Republic, France, UK, Australia and the USA. The group have also applied to Ballyhoura for a second stream of funding which will be used for more equipment including additional cameras and desktop PC's.

Conclusion

Further activities will include a broadening of the topics covered to include, provisionally; Tidy Towns, Tús, the Clare Glens, mountain walks, public projects, fishing competitions, tours of the inland fisheries, incorporation of a blue screen, football/hurling/rugby/soccer match footage and interview segments with local people of interest.