

## Rossendale TV – Project In A Box

What follows is a brief outline of what it would take to set up a local internet TV channel like Rossendale TV

### 1) A Name and Web Domain

Choose a name for the project for the project, then see if there is an appropriate domain available from one of the many companies in the business of registering web domains for clients – such as [www.freeparking.co.uk](http://www.freeparking.co.uk)

Say, for example, we were planning to set up a channel called ‘Anytown TV’. Going to the site above and typing ‘anytowntv’ into the first box of the advanced search facility shows us that there are a range of anytowntv names available: .co.uk, .net, .org, .com, .org.uk and so on, at different prices. Some domains will doubtless already be taken where your town is concerned, but you should find something available.

### 2) Production Equipment

To make videos you’ll need a camera and an editing station. The CAR Video Unit has always aimed to provide its trainees with the skills they will need to work in the industry or get places on media production courses (much more competitive than media studies courses) at FE colleges and universities. As a result, we need broadcast quality equipment to train them on.

To produce short web clips like those on the Rossendale TV site, however, less expensive equipment is perfectly adequate. Consumer video cameras can be purchased for less than £100.

Professional editing software, even with educational software licenses, can be expensive. The video unit uses Avid (still the industry standard, despite the efforts of Final Cut Pro and Adobe Premier) which costs around £200 + VAT from educational outlets such as [www.academia.co.uk](http://www.academia.co.uk). At the other end of the scale, search for ‘video editing software free’ on Google to see what is available at no cost.

Finally you’ll need a computer to install the software on. As a general rule it’s better to buy the software first then get a computer or laptop with the correct specifications to run it.

### 3) Training

The CAR Video Unit has an in-house trainer who took over thirty people through the basics of video camera operation and video editing over the course of the project, nine of whom went on to study for a Level 2 NCFE Award in Moving Image Production (possible thanks to our linkage with Accrington & Rossendale College). The basic course of eight, three to four hour weekly sessions (2 sessions on camera operation, 4 sessions on editing, 2 sessions to finish off projects) should be sufficient to complete as many 3 to 5 minute films as there are editing stations, though delays in securing scripts (see below) and in shooting (thanks to the winter weather) meant that it took considerably longer in some cases. In addition to the formal teaching, a considerable amount of the trainer’s time will also be taken up with pre-production (finding subjects, securing scripts, arranging shoots etc) and in overseeing the camera crews on shoots.

If trainers need to be outsourced they will expect to command £22.50 per hour or thereabouts.

#### 4) Subjects

The Rossendale TV project was set up to feature an ever expanding number of films promoting the area and its amenities with a view increasing tourism. This entailed contacting the various museums, sports facilities, cultural amenities etc which we planned to feature. Our usual practice has been to link project groups with local community and voluntary organisations who would find some sort of video content useful (it's always more interesting for trainees to have a 'real' project to work on in training) and interview someone from the organisation concerned. The resulting interviews (which can be up to 30 minutes in length) are then edited down to a useable three to five minutes (which can take up two training sessions) and suitable illustrative footage shot to complement it. Because of the volume of films we were aiming to complete and the short timescale we had to do it, however, for this project we decided to ask each organisation concerned to provide us with a 600 to 900 word 'voice over' script (equating to 3 to 5 minutes of screen time). These scripts were then recorded (mostly using a sound booth made available by Rossendale Radio) by local people from the radio station, amateur dramatic organisations and so on to form the 'backbone' of the films. Appropriate footage was then secured to illustrate the subjects.

Rossendale Radio were also kind enough to provide a selection of copyright-free music clips which could be used to 'top and tail' the films by providing music for the opening titles and end credits.

#### 5) The Website

This website was developed by Accrington and Rossendale College, our partners in the project. The coding is Crown Copyright and freely available to anyone who wishes to utilise it. The site was developed so that the logo and colour scheme could easily be changed to create new net TV channels for other areas.

The original idea was to upload **all** the films initially produced in the course of the project so that the site could launch with a 'big splash'. The aim of the site is to attract as much traffic as possible, however, and the web developers suggested that this could be best achieved by featuring a single sponsored film initially, and dropping in further films on a fortnightly basis alongside new blog posts.

#### 6) Sponsorship

The main purpose of Rossendale TV where the Community Video Unit which launched it is concerned is to generate revenue to help fund its provision of free training in Video Production to the people of Rossendale – and beyond. Consequently, we are seeking sponsors for each film which is featured on the site. In addition, we have space for a number of banner advertisements throughout the site. Sponsors are being sought through direct approaches to local business organisations and by encouraging the subjects of the films, where possible, to enlist the aid of their friends and supporters.

## 7) Promotion

The more visitors there are to the site, the more attractive sponsorship and advertising will be to local businesses. As a result we are promoting the site on a prominent billboard and the websites of local on-line news providers. One of these, About My Area BB4, has allowed us to link to its regularly updated news reports. Producing a regular video news bulletin is one of our future objectives since this will give every resident of Rossendale a reason to visit the site on a regular basis.

Where the launch of Rossendale TV was concerned, press releases announcing it were sent to all local news providers – radio, on-line and print media.

## 8) Web Hosting

When your website is ready to go and you have a store of films ready to drop into it you will need to find a server to host it on. Many companies registering domain names for clients have web hosting services also, usually at quite reasonable prices. At the other end of the scale, dedicated servers hosting an increasing amount of video content (which takes up a lot of space) may be necessary as your traffic increases and the number of films hosted goes up.

## 9) Outcomes

Adult learners who have participated in the course report that they are now much more confident to film & edit their own video project and agree that they have a greater skills base thanks to the training received from CAR Video Unit. 15 out of the 35 total adult learners indicated they would like to continue to complete the NCFE Level 2 Moving Image award that we offered through Accrington & Rossendale College (additional hours required) and 9 adult learners are currently going through the accreditation process (as of March 2012). The largest unexpected outcome was the rediscovery of Rossendale – through focus groups with adult learners, the key theme that was continually reported was how they visited areas of Rossendale they had never seen before or hadn't visited since they were little. This has enthused several adult learners to discover new areas or go back to previously filmed places to make films of their own.

Local community & voluntary groups who provided a script for the trainees to film have been provided with the opportunity to have a commercial broadcast quality short video that describes their attraction / group / place and a dedicated web site where it will be hosted. Again unexpected outcomes have risen out of the partnership opportunities – filming a short piece about a local museum has, through the adult learner who was participating at the time, resulted in a link with a neighbouring town seeking to set up its own museum.

The effect on the wider community is yet to be fully noted. The project lends itself to launching the website at the end of the project – Rossendale TV is just about to go live (March 2012). Updates will be provided.

## 10) Resources

Links to lesson handouts, evaluation & promotional materials are also available on the website.