CHAPTER 8 PLANNING MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia Communications by Marie Rutherford

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Please visit the web version of Multimedia Communications (https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/ multimediacomm/) to access the complete book, interactive activities and ancillary resources.

Learning Outcomes
 Outline the stages of project planning and its application in a multimedia presentation Detail the significance of developing a plan for a multimedia project Develop a multimedia project plan considering audience, format, and content, and resources Explore, practice and apply project design strategies Identify key terms related to planning multimedia

Project Planning

The planning stage of a multimedia project is the backbone of the presentation's success. When completed effectively high quality standards are met and goals achieved. The planning step lays out the foundational elements of the presentation. Consider the following steps of the planning stage or phase:

- Set clear objectives which captures the vision of the presentation
- Identify resources needed
- Assemble the member involved
- Collaborate with project members, ensuring everyone understands their role and

responsibilities

- Quality control, allows for the establishment of standards and identify the benchmarks of the project
- Build in flexibility and adaptability, this allows to adjustments to be made during the project especially when encountering unexpected challenges

This chapter will explore the elements of planning a multimedia presentation considering the content strategy and design principles.

Chapter Organziation and Preview	
 Overview of Project Planning Plan it! Planning Multimedia Web Pages Google's Search Engines Explore, Practice and Apply Key Chapter Terms 	

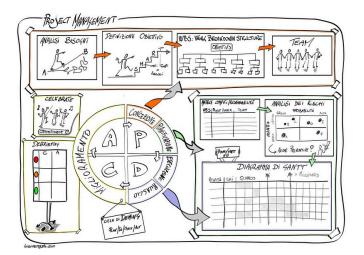
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8.1 OVERVIEW OF PROJECT PLANNING

Introduction to Project Planning

Project planning is at the heart of the project life cycle, and tells everyone involved where you're going and how you're going to get there. The planning phase is when the project plans are documented, the project deliverables and requirements are defined, and the project schedule is created. It involves creating a set of plans to help guide your team through the implementation and closure phases of the project. The plans created during this phase will help you manage time, cost, quality, changes, risk, and related issues. They will



A project management sketchnote, showing different aspects of planing, including defining objectives, team, a Gantt chart, etc. **Source:** Image by Luigi Mengato, CC BY 2.0

also help you control staff and external suppliers to ensure that you deliver the project on time, within budget, and within schedule.

The project planning phase is often the most challenging phase for a project manager, as you need to make an educated guess about the staff, resources, and equipment needed to complete your project. You may also need to plan your communications and procurement activities, as well as contract any third-party suppliers.

The purpose of the project planning phase is to:

- Establish requirements
- Establish cost, schedule, list of deliverables, and delivery dates
- Establish resources plans
- Obtain management approval and proceed to the next phase

The basic processes of project planning are:

- Scope planning specifying the in-scope requirements for the project to facilitate creating the work breakdown structure
- Preparation of the work breakdown structure spelling out the breakdown of the project into tasks and sub-tasks

- Project schedule development listing the entire schedule of the activities and detailing their sequence of implementation
- Resource planning indicating who will do what work, at which time, and if any special skills are needed to accomplish the project tasks
- Budget planning specifying the budgeted cost to be incurred at the completion of the project
- Procurement planning focusing on vendors outside your company and subcontracting
- Risk management planning for possible risks and considering optional contingency plans and mitigation strategies
- Quality planning assessing quality criteria to be used for the project
- Communication planning designing the communication strategy with all project stakeholders

Users will often begin describing their objectives in qualitative language. The project manager must work with the user to provide quantifiable definitions to those qualitative terms. These quantifiable criteria include schedule, cost, and quality measures. In the case of project objectives, these elements are used as measurements to determine project satisfaction and successful completion. Subjective evaluations are replaced by actual numeric attributes.

Example 1

A web user may ask for a fast system. The quantitative requirement should be all screens must load in under three seconds. Describing the time limit during which the screen must load is specific and tangible. For that reason, you'll know that the requirement has been successfully completed when the objective has been met.

Example 2

Let's say that your company is going to produce a holiday batch of eggnog. Your objective statement might be stated this way: Christmas Cheer, Inc. will produce two million cases of holiday eggnog, to be shipped to our distributors by October 30, at a total cost of \$1.5 million or less. The objective criteria in this statement are clearly stated and successful fulfillment can easily be measured. Stakeholders will know that the objectives are met when the two million cases are produced and shipped by the due date within the budget stated.

When articulating the project objectives you should follow the SMART rule:

- **Specific** get into the details. Objectives should be specific and written in clear, concise, and understandable terms.
- **Measurable** use quantitative language. You need to know when you have successfully completed the task.
- Acceptable agreed with the stakeholders.
- **Realistic** in terms of achievement. Objectives that are impossible to accomplish are not realistic and not attainable. Objectives must be centred in reality.
- **Time based** deadlines not durations. Objectives should have a time frame with an end date assigned to them.

If you follow these principles, you'll be certain that your objectives meet the quantifiable criteria needed to measure success.

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8.2 PLAN IT!

Planning Multimedia

Review the infographic below as you think about how you will plan your project. Review the steps identified in the infographic to serve as a guide for planning.

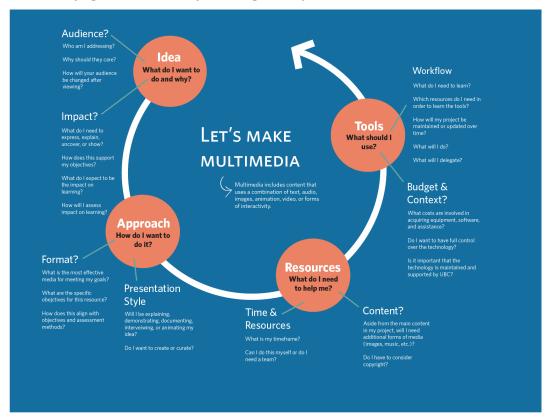


Figure 8.2a: Let's Make Multimedia [Figure 8.2a Image Description]

Idea

The following questions can help you refine your idea:

- What is my objective?
- What do I want to express, explain, uncover, show or document?
- Why is it important?
- How will this resource be used?

Approach

The following questions can help you refine your approach:

- Does a similar resource to the one I am envisioning already exist online somewhere? You may
 want to check Creative Commons licensed sources (http://copyright.ubc.ca/help-andresources/creative-commons-guide/) as well as resources in the Public Domain
 (http://copyright.ubc.ca/help-and-resources/public-domain/) to start.
- Can you curate content by building some activities or context around a video that already exists or do you need to create something new?
- What is my timeframe?
- Can I do this by myself or will I need a team?
- What approach will best help me meet my goals? To get a sense of what approach might serve your needs, review this table:

	11 8 7	
Goal	Ingredients	Approach
Expose common misconception	Demonstrate a concept, interview students/others for predictions	Video
Demonstrate a process	Whiteboard or application on-screen to show actions	Screencast
Document experience	Go to a location if it is field experience you want to document, or conduct an individual interview if it is a personal story you want to document	Video interview
Set tone for the course/learning community	You and your TAs can use a web-cam to make a welcome or introductory video message	Web cam style video recording
Tell a story	Audio, video, images or some combination	Podcast, screencast, narrated slides, or video
Explain a complex concept or phenomenon	Expose details that are impossible to see, or highlight connections	animation, stop motion animation, screencast

Table 1: What approach might serve your needs?

Questions to consider:

- What do I need to know about copyright? (if you are producing resources and publishing online)?
- Plan Your Project Worksheets: Video [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/e/e9/

Plan_Your_Project_-_video.pdf), Audio [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/2/27/ Plan_Your_Project_-_audio.pdf), Screencast [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/5/5a/ PYP.pdf): Guides to help you work out the learning objectives, content and associated learning activities.

Further questions to consider:

- Am I intending to publish to content? If so, how will I handle permissions?
- What will I need to budget for?
- Will I need to purchase equipment or can I borrow it?
- Can I do what I want to do with the equipment I have?
- What sort of permission(s) will I need to obtain (ie student permissions)?

Tools

The following questions can help you choose your tools:

- Will I incur any costs related to the use or maintenance of the tool I select?
- How much of an investment will I need to make to learn the tool or approach I have selected?
- Is there a return on investment of my time in learning this tool?
- Will I need to update the project ongoing? Will the tool or service I choose support that?
- Have I tested it? (ie. the file formats it exports to, transferability of those files, etc.)
- What training and skills are required?
- What are the benefits to collaborating on, hosting or embedding my work in an open environment (ie YouTube, Blogs, Wiki, Wikipedia, etc)? What are the risks?

Resources Worksheets and Checklists

Planning Worksheets: to help you work out your goals, and associated learning activities. **Disclaimer**: These worksheets are geared for educators however, the steps related to planning a multimedia project are both helpful and valid.

- Plan Your Screencast Project Worksheet [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/5/5a/PYP.pdf)
- Plan Your Video Project Worksheet [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/e/e9/ Plan_Your_Project_-_video.pdf)
- Plan Your Audio Project Worksheet [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/2/27/ Plan_Your_Project_-_audio.pdf)

Checklists

- Audio planning checklist [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/2/29/ Audio_Planning_Checklist.pdf)
- Video planning checklist [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/6/6a/ Video_Planning_Checklist.pdf)
- Screencasting planning checklist [PDF] (http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/c/cc/ Screen_Recording_Checklist.pdf)

Image description

Figure 8.2a Image Description:

Let's make multimedia. Multimedia includes content that uses a combination of text, audio, images, animation, video, or forms of interactivity.

Idea: What do I want to do and why?

Audience?

- Who am I addressing?
- Why should they care?
- How will your audience be changed after viewing?

Impact?

- What do I need to express, explain, uncover, or show?
- How does this support my objectives?
- What do I expect to be the impact on learning?

Approach: How do I want to do it?

Format?

- What is the most effective media for meeting my goals?
- What are the specific objectives for this resource?
- How does this align with objectives and assessment methods?

Presentation style

- Will I be explaining, demonstrating, documenting, interviewing, or animating my idea?
- Do I want to create or curate?

Resources: What do I need to help me?

Time & resources:

- What is my timeframe?
- Can I do this myself or do I need a team?

Content?

- Aside from the main content in my project, will I need additional forms of media (images, music, etc.)?
- Do I have to consider copyright?

Tools: What should I use?

Workflow:

- What do I need to learn?
- Which resources do I need in order to learn the tools?
- How will my project be maintained or updated over time?
- What will I do?
- What will I delegate?

Budget & Context?

- What costs are involved in acquiring equipment, software and assistance?
- Do I want to have full control over the technology?
- Is it important that the technology is maintained and supported by UBC (or another institution)? [Back to Fig 8.2a]

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• Original source: https://wiki.ubc.ca/Sandbox:Plan_It

8.3 PLANNING MULTIMEDIA WEB PAGES

Strategies for Multimedia Web Page Design

In this section, we'll look at the planning principles of design and the different ways they might be applied to a web page, blog post, or social media ad. Then in the next sections, we'll drill down to consider some of the design strategies that are particular to digital writing.

Web Page Structure

Often the first design decision relates to the bigger picture of the overall page structure—which different elements (or *modes*, if you think back to our chapter on multimodality) will be placed on the page and where they will go.

- Limit the amount of information on the page. Too much information becomes overwhelming for readers and limits their ability to respond appropriately.
- Emphasize the most important information. It's important to draw readers' attention to key ideas and action items.



Different page layouts shown here illustrate how ads could be placed at the top, left and right sides of content, as well as in the middle of content. **Source:** Ad layouts, by JuralMin, on Freerange under Equalicense.

- Stick with what readers know. Khazanova (2022) suggests using "familiar scenarios and logic" that will make a page more intuitive for readers, who are used to certain page structures and design elements.
- Create a page that has balance. According to Steven Bradley (2017) in this *Smashing Magazine* article (https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2015/06/design-principlescompositional-balance-symmetry-asymmetry/), "Balancing a composition involves arranging both positive elements and negative space [white space] in such a way that no one area of the design overwhelms other areas" (para. 3).

For some examples of different types of page layouts, take a look at Paul Boag's article on WebsiteSetup.org (https://websitesetup.org/website-layouts/). It not only provides layout options, but it explains how the different options fit with different types of content and purposes.



Visual hierarchy shows a bold, black box,

largest at top, with 5 boxes underneath

which is a light grey and only a fraction of the height of the first box. **Source:** Visual Hierarchy, by Cara Miller (CC BY

becoming slightly lighter in colour, smaller in height until the bottom box,

Visual Hierarchy

The visual hierarchy and overall structure of a design go hand in hand. While an effective page structure creates visual appeal and makes the information easier to navigate, visual hierarchy directs readers' attention to the most important elements on the page, often because of their placement as well as their size.

Grouping Similar Items

Several of the Gestalt principles of design relate to the way people will naturally group items together based on visual cues, which once again helps them understand how items relate to each other and engage with the content of a page more quickly.

Consistency

Many of the design principles we've already discussed relate to consistency (also known as *repetition*) so that readers know what to expect and can easily read and interpret the content provided. This relates to a lot of different choices, from organizational structure to smaller design considerations like color, spacing, and font.

Variety

4.0)

An effective design uses a variety of design elements to engage readers as well as to clarify information. Chapter 10 in this textbook discussed multimodal messages and the power that various modes—images, text, color, video, sound—have to help clarify and enhance the meaning of a message. For that reason, and because it's more visually appealing and interesting, you should think about how to use a variety of elements to draw readers' attention.

Quality

It should probably go without saying that the elements that you do include on a page should be high quality, creating a professional look and feel. This relates to all of the design principles we've discussed up to this point, but here let's focus specifically on pictures and videos. A quality photo, for instance, is one that is in

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focus and is a high enough resolution so that it isn't pixelated or blurry. It has a clear focal point with the image positioned appropriately, so that it fits comfortably into the frame.

Videos can be an excellent tool because they provide clear visuals that can help viewers see a particular process, event, or product. They can also create emotional connections as viewers see people's faces and hear their voices.

Special Considerations for Digital Design

As you put together designs that will be viewed on digital devices, there are a few special considerations that enhance usability:

- File sizes. We've already discussed the fact that you should only use quality images and videos to engage viewers, but the other side of that is that higher-resolution images and high-quality videos are usually really big files that take up precious storage space and often result in longer loading times, which can quickly frustrate impatient users. Fortunately, web graphics don't need to be as high-resolution as print graphics (72 dpi compared to 300 dpi), which means the files will be significantly smaller.
- Cascading style sheets. With so many WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) platforms, it's no longer necessary for you to know how to code a website in HTML to create one. Cascading style sheets describe a way of coding the elements on a web page so that they are consistent across different pages—so that the title of each page, for instance, has the same font style, font size, color choice, and spacing. Most web platforms have these types of choices built in so that you can make selections that will be consistent across different pages of your website without having to know the HTML code. Utilizing these options will help you more easily create consistency and unity.
- Hyperlinks and buttons. Here's where your design choices can leverage concepts that your audience is familiar with, and since your hyperlinks and buttons usually accompany your call to action—inviting readers to take some sort of step toward your desired goal—it's important that they recognize these elements. It's pretty simple, really. While some of the more subtle style choices might vary, it would be to your benefit to make your buttons look similar—not only from one page to the next but also in comparison to other websites.
- Mobile responsiveness. A mobile-responsive website (https://www.constantcontact.com/blog/ website-mobile-friendly-vs-mobile-responsive/) is one that reformats for maximum readability and usability depending on the user's device (Constant Contact, 2022). So instead of displaying the same, shrunken-down version of the home page on your cell phone, the overall format changes so that key items are bigger and formatted vertically, so it's easier to scroll through and click on the items that you want. This is helpful not only when going from a laptop to a

cell phone but also when switching from one screen size to the next or one type of browser to the next. It ensures that the items are reformatted appropriately. Once again, many web platforms are mobile responsive and make it possible for you to toggle back and forth between multiple views as you put a page together.

• Testing. One great thing about digital design is that it's relatively easy to change. Content strategists and web developers are constantly "testing" the effectiveness of their pages, not just through form feedback but also through various metrics that show how long viewers stayed on a specific page, how many people clicked on the CTA, and so on. Playing around with different versions and monitoring the results lets you gauge how your design choices are landing with your audience and to make improvements along the way.

Attribution & References

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8.4 GOOGLE'S SEARCH ENGINES

Introduction to Google's Search Engines

It is helpful to have a better understanding of how search engines work to find and sort relevant content. According to Google (https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide), this process happens automatically as web pages are added, but there are definitely key strategies that make it easier for Googlebot (https://developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/googlebot) to access and correctly index content (Google Search Central, n.d.-b; Google Search Central n.d.-c). Since Google is by far the most dominant search engine, capturing 90% of all searches (https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/ google-statistics-facts) worldwide (Broadband Search, 2023), we'll focus on its process, which involves three basic steps (https://developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/how-search-works) (Google Search Central, n.d.-a):

- 1. Crawling. Googlebot is programmed to constantly send out "spiders" that locate new and updated web pages so they can be added to the list. These spiders "fetch" pages by following the links on existing pages and then following the links on those new pages and so forth, which adds to billions of web pages that have been identified.
- 2. Indexing. As the name implies, this is the process of discerning what a particular page is about so the page can be accessed later on in response to a relevant query. This includes the content on the page that is visible to users—the titles, subheadings, and other written content. It also includes meta descriptions, content tags, and alt descriptions that can be used to label videos and pictures.
- 3. Providing search results. This is where ranking comes into play. When a person does a Google search, Google tries to match the keywords from the search to the pages it has indexed in order to find the content that is the most relevant. The more relevant and high quality the content, the higher it will rank on the search engine results page.

Watch How Google Search crawls pages (7 minutes) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/ JuK7NnfyEuc) for a better understanding of how this process works.

What is Search Engine Optimization (SEO)?

Search engine optimization is the process of getting your webpages and content to rank higher in non-paid (also known as "organic") search engine results so that you increase the quality and quantity of traffic to your website or content.

Please note that the goal of SEO is not simply to optimize for the search engines, but rather to structure your content so that target audiences can easily find content that provides the answers they seek. Understanding what people are searching for online, the kinds of words or terminology they are using, and the types of content they want to consume are critical in any search engine optimization strategy. When done correctly, SEO allows marketers to better reach and connect with people searching for the products and services their organization offers.

From your customer personas, you should know what your target audience wants and is interested in. SEO simply helps marketers structure their content so that search engines can find, understand, and index it and ultimately, deliver it when a target customer is looking for it.

Creating Keywords

At its core, SEO is about identifying the keywords that the target audience will use when they search for information and then using those keywords throughout your web content so that the page is properly indexed and ranks high on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP) for queries that use those keywords. As we've already mentioned, this is largely about understanding your audience—their needs, values, priorities, and potential obstacles—so that you can provide meaningful content that will engage their interest.

Watch What are keywords? | SEO for beginners training (6 mins) on YouTube (https://youtu.be/Xb-DXstOD2E) for a brief overview of keywords for websites, and how they are used

You'll learn more this topic in Content Strategy & Website Design Interface in Chapter 11.

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• What is SEO? is adapted 2.3 Search Engine Optimization In Foundations in Digital Marketing

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8.5 EXPLORE, PRACTICE AND APPLY

Overview: Explore, Practice and Apply

Activities found on this page are designed to provide opportunities to explore, practice, and apply concepts presented in chapter 8.

Explore

Explore Activity 1

Let's put some of the design principles covered into action. Review the FedEx home page (https://www.fedex.com/en-us/) —or any other website of your choosing. Consider what planning steps were involved to create this webpage. Do you think any planning steps were missed? Which aspects of the webpage do you consider most effective in both engaging readers (both visually and emotionally) and helping them easily navigate the information on the page? Why?

Explore Activity 2

Find an example of a web page that uses keywords effectively. Start by identifying a question or keyword phrase and doing a Google search. Select one of the top search results and review the web page to see how and where the keywords you used in your search are used throughout the page. Now compare this web page with another one further down on the list, perhaps on the second or third results page. Is there a difference between the way the two pages use keywords? Why do you think the second page is ranked so much lower than the first?

Practice

Practice Activity 1

Consider the list of topics below. Select one of these topics. Outline the steps involved for planning to bring this idea from concept to completion. When selecting the topic approach it from the perspective this information is intended to be viewed on a web page or social media platform. Consider what you will need to ensure it has multimedia elements.

- Yard sale announcement
- Graduation open house announcement
- Ad for a neighborhood block party
- Public service announcement about suicide awareness
- "Closeout" sale

Discussion Questions

- 1. Name some important strategies that will help you create relevant keywords for a web page.
- 2. How can you prioritize keywords so that you don't have too many?

Apply

Apply Activity 1

Using the webpage reviewed in the explore activity 1. Now consider how the page might have been structured differently. Create a new plan that organizes the elements in a different way.

Consider how you could utilize some of the other design principles to engage readers in this new page design.

Apply Activity 2

Let's review the presentation created in week 1 or create a new presentation for this activity. Design and create a planning grid to outline the project. Submit the planning grid as identified by your instructor.

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8.6 KEY CHAPTER TERMS

Chapter 8 Terms

Downloadable Chapter Key Terms Worksheet

View or download & print the PDF or Word format of the worksheet shown below.

Design Chapter Key Terms Worksheet [Word]

Design Chapter Key Terms Worksheet [PDF]

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