

INFORMATION

Advice for preparation of digitalized video

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□ Recording

A bad video recording will not become better in a digital version. Therefore it is very important that you already from the beginning make sure that the quality of the recorded material is as good as your camera allows.

Regardless of what camera and techniques you are using during the recording there are a few things you can do to increase the quality of the finished video file.

This is how you create the conditions for a good result when recording:

1. Make sure you are using good light.

Bad light will cause blurred and grainy images. Try to get a good light. If it is difficult to move the lights, move the recording scenery to a well-lit place instead. Record the film from the directions that provide the best light.

2. Create a calm background.

Too many details in the background, especially moving details will affect the recording negatively. You could place a piece of material behind the actor.

3. Do not film too far away from the actor.

Place the actor so that he/she is visible in the image. The face should not be in the middle of the picture but roughly as the picture shows here.



4. Give the film margins before and after the Sign Language.

By starting to record 10 seconds before the actor starts using Sign Language and stopping 10 seconds after the actor has finished you will avoid problems such as missing something or difficulties to digitalize since the start of the film is too close to the beginning of the Sign Language.

5. Do not use clothes with similar colors and light as the skin.

There should be a contrast between hands and clothes to make the signs clearly visible.

6. Avoid intense red colors.

This applies if you are filming with VHS or Super-VHS. Red has a tendency to run.

The choice of camera also makes a big difference. An S-VHS camera is better than a VHS camera. A DV camera is even better. However, it is possible to get a good result also with a VHS camera if you have followed the advice listed above. The light and where you place the camera is essential.

□ Editing

Whether you should edit your film or not depends on the contents of your film. If your film is going to be one single video with several Sign Language sequences, you need to edit the film. If every Sign Language sequence is going to be a separate file, you don't need to edit the film. You can digitalize directly from the original tape.

Video format and editing

- **VHS**

If you have filmed using a VHS/S-VHS camera editing should preferably be performed on a computer or avoided since the image quality may be ruined.

Analogue editing: Start and stop for the edited film

When cutting the first image of the film, cut the image approximately 10 seconds before the Sign Language starts.

When you have completed all the cuts the film is going to contain, and is about to perform the last cut of the film, cut out approximately 10 seconds after the last sign.

The margins you get in the beginning and the end of the film gives you more freedom to choose start point and end point when digitalizing the video file. At the same time it makes it easier for the technique to create the video file's first image if the image appears a few seconds before the digitalization is about to begin.

(Different digitalization equipment has different requirements and you need to study how your digitalization handles in points and out points and adjust your film to this.)

□ Digitalization

There are many different types of equipments for digitalization. Which one to choose is difficult to say. It depends on your quality requirements, but also if you are filming with an analogue format (VHS, S-VHS) or a digital format (DV).

We are not going to discuss any particular types of equipment here but only give you some general pieces of advice.

- **Select a file format that meets your requirements.**
A shorter sequence that requires higher quality can be made in Avi format.
However, we recommend Mpeg1 format (mpg, mpeg).
(See the paragraph “Video formats supported by Link-it” in the document “Working with several video files in Link-it”.)
- **Start the file approx. 2 seconds before the Sign Language starts and approx. 2 seconds after the Sign Language ends.**
The digitalization is often not precise and the start point can be moved half a second either forwards or backwards in the finished file. You can compensate for this by not placing the in point and out point too close to the Sign Language.
- **Do not select higher quality for the film than you need.**
In some digitalizations it is possible to select a very high quality for the file you are creating. If the film is long a higher quality can be a disadvantage for the computer and the video file will be slow to load into Link-it. A high image quality can also result in the fact that the video file becomes too large (in Mb) to place on a CD. Select an image quality that meets your requirements. The image size of the video image should be around 352x288 (mpeg standard size).
- **Some guidelines for quality:**
If you are going to replay the film in full screen, you should select a higher quality. Otherwise the picture may be grainy when it is enlarged.
The shorter playtime the file has, the higher quality it can have.
A normal file in Mpeg1 that also can be replayed in full screen is about 15 Mb/minute (750-900 KBit/s).
The quality of your file compared to its size in Mb can vary depending on how good your digitalization equipment is.