Guidelines for LiU’s visual vocabulary in video material

Background and aims

Video is playing an ever-increasing role in digital channels of communication, and many actors are competing for attention. The aims of establishing a common creative framework for Linköping University (LiU) are to make our work with video more effective, to create better procedures, and to strengthen our brand.

This document should be used as a guide and inspiration for the way we approach questions of design and branding when we produce videos published by LiU. You can select certain parts to use when planning production or when drawing up a brief for the video producer.

Limitations: This document does not describe the practical aspects of producing or ordering from others film and video material.

Introduction

Video communication, as all communication from LiU, is to be consistent with our brand.

The feeling that LiU wants to permeate our communication is the branding promise: “Innovation is our only tradition” (although we avoid using this phrase in copy).

Using video places high demands on the content and should give added value by expressing something that it is not possible to communicate with the same effect in any other medium. If, for example, you film an interview, make sure that you film it in several sequences or scenes: do not use a single static scene with a talking head. Use several scenes that together reinforce the message, touch the viewer, and give the narrative impetus.

Types of video

Start by deciding which type of video material you will use. The following factors affect the decision:

- Sender (Who are you?)
- Message (What do you want to say?)
- Target group (Whom do you want to reach?)
- Aim (What do you want to achieve?)
The factors listed above determine how the various components of the film are expressed: the format, language, duration, music, dramatic expression, tempo, method of distribution, motifs used, etc. Some of these components can, however, be adapted to follow certain recommendations common throughout LiU. These are described in the following sections.

Some of the categories of video that are often used at Linköping University are listed below, with some examples in each category.

- **Documentation**
  - Documentary videos from lectures and events, such as *Föreläsning med Hans Hentzell*
  - Live transmission
- **Articles**
  - News articles, such as *Robotar i hårdträning inför fotbollscup*
  - Portraits of LiU people (researchers/students/employees/alumni), such as *Lars Eriksson - Professor i fordonssystem*
- **Information**
  - Films giving information about research or education
  - Instructions (for both external and internal viewers), such as *Things to do when you arrive to Sweden*
- **Marketing & profiling**
  - Films to recruit to and market the university, such as *Livet som student vid Linköpings universitet*
  - Presentations (about LiU as a whole, or more specific activities), such as *Laboratory action.*

**Visual vocabulary**

Linköping University (LiU) has an image policy for photographs. This is generally valid also for video material. Just as is the case with our visual vocabulary, our “video vocabulary” concerns what we choose to display and the way in which we choose to display it. The concept of video vocabulary is greater than technical issues such as filters or particular colours.

The use of video is sensitive to trends, and in order to ensure that LiU is experienced as innovative, and thus also relevant, we should keep across these trends and adapt to them when appropriate. This is particularly the case when our target group is also sensitive to trends.

What is most important is that we create content that helps us achieve our communication goals. It is also important that this is done in a way that is
interesting, unambiguous and engaging for the target group. This is more important than becoming obsessed with getting the visual vocabulary exactly right.

Some points, however, are worth consideration:

1. **Authenticity.** Use a documentary mode of thinking, and present a true picture of LiU. Try to invite the viewers in to participate in our reality, and show them what’s happening behind the scenes. It is sometimes necessary when producing content for a video to direct a scene and arrange what ends up in the image. Even though at first sight this may appear to be far from authentic and documentary, the impression received by the viewer can still be a feeling of authenticity, and this is what we want to achieve.

2. **Present what’s exciting and beautiful in everyday life, and what’s interesting and understandable in complex ideas.** We shall aspire to artistic quality through finding exciting angles, aesthetic values, unpredictability and revolutionary moments. This may involve, for example, finding simple details and then using depth, angles, motion, lighting or another property to present the motif in a more interesting and exciting manner.

3. **Demonstrate drive and aspiration.** Methods to demonstrate the drive that characterises LiU’s way of working include the use of upwards and forwards motion, tempo and rhythm, and highlighting examples of our innovative way of thinking and our ambition.

4. **From object to subject.** Rather than letting someone else talk about what we are trying to communicate, we base our work on the people at LiU and the energy and ability they possess, no matter where in the university they work and no matter what title they have. We can, for example, choose to create subjectivity in the image sequences by using a first-person perspective, or by using scenes in which we approach the person being depicted closely, and allow their personality to make itself felt.

5. **Real surroundings.** It’s a good idea to use surroundings that are living, not ones that have been set up as a background.

**Tone of voice**

Linköping University has defined [Riktlinjer för språk och tonalitet](http://www.liu.se). When producing videos, not only what we say but also how we say it should be consistent with LiU’s brand. It may be a case of drawing attention to something new and exciting, and
demonstrating in various ways that we are innovators. We want to be inspiring and appeal to the viewers’ emotions, and thus often choose surprising angles and vocabulary. We use metaphors and images that stimulate and surprise.

Some messages and attitudes that can help when planning for the right tone of voice in a production:

- Innovation
- Courage
- Drive
- Surprising/stimulating
- Thought-provoking
- Delight in discovery/curiosity
- Behind the scenes/personal/openness
- Participation/community.

**Technical quality**

We shall always aspire to as high a technical quality as possible within the production framework.

It is often possible to use a video with good technical quality longer. All video productions will sooner or later become too old to use, and it is important for this reason to include the expected lifetime of the video when the budget is set and the production planned. If you expect your video to have a long lifetime, remember to avoid expressions related to a specific date or period, such as “last spring”. You should also avoid referring to transient trends.

**Graphic identity**

The colours, typography and graphic identity used in video material must follow LiU’s graphic identity profile.

Flat design

Animations and graphical elements are to follow the flat design principle. This means, basically that we want to avoid shadows, gradients and textures, and we use instead clear areas, sharp edges, two-dimensional (flat) illustrations and graphical elements, and clear contrasts.

Flat design should also be used for animations and transitions. Mobility can be in the form of, for example, rotation of the logotype or text around the X-axis, or the motion of thin layers horizontally and vertically into and out of the frame. It is, however, important to remember that animations should not be experienced as
chaotic, and thus you should avoid mixing too many directions in neighbouring sequences.

A title sequence and closing sequence should be used for films longer than 3 minutes. It can be sufficient for shorter films to use a simple statement of the publisher, such as LiU’s logotype. Templates for title sequences and names are available. Contact the Communication and Marketing Division to gain access to these.

**Music and sound**

The sound is at least as important as the images, and it is essential to ensure that the sound is pure and clear.

Music can stimulate emotion and memories, and can reinforce or completely change the message of a video. The music should reflect the message and LiU’s brand, and should therefore be modern. Trendy music is sometimes suitable, but there is a risk that it will soon be out-of-date.

It’s a good idea to be aware of how you use background sound: make sure that it doesn’t disturb the main sound focus, such as spoken words. It is, however, possible to use background sound to give a more living depiction of the surroundings shown in the images and it can contribute to creating a feeling of authenticity, just as our video vocabulary prescribes.

Make sure that you take care of copyright issues when using music and sound files.

When video productions include spoken material (voices), they must be subtitled, in order to satisfy the accessibility requirements placed onto government agencies.

**Include diversity**

LiU is to be characterised by an inclusive work and study environment, and it is therefore important that an inclusive perspective is considered when we create videos. Since we want to mirror the broad diversity that we have at the university, we must work actively to include people who transcend accepted norms in our productions.

**Contact**

Contact the Communication and Marketing Division, grafiskmanual@liu.se if you have any questions.