

MEDIAPACK NEWS

Service updates, news and production tips from Mediapack



STREAMING AHEAD IN 2021

Live Streaming moved front & centre in 2020 but for completely unexpected reasons.

For some time now, live streaming has been flexing its muscles in the background, with that knowing look that says "my time is coming". That's not to say it wasn't already a significant phenomenon already by the end of 2019, it's just that it hadn't quite broken through to touch the majority of people in the way that Podcasting had. But then 2020 happened!

The smart money in the production business, has always been on live streaming becoming more and more a part of the social media and 'micro broadcasting' mix but its rise as the communications tool of choice and also as one of the few viable methods for creating interesting content safely during lockdown, has opened up a world of possibilities.

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OUR TOOLKIT

Outsource your editing both to **save time** and get better results. All edits include **full audio mastering and colour correction**.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our production subscription packages were soft launched in September and we're introducing **new packages in 2021**.

LEARN

We're expanding our **Video Skills Workshop** offering in 2021 to include **remote coaching, training and mentoring**.



Filming in Covid

Long poles, cameras at a distance - a new way of working? No, that's just how we've always done it - **read more on page 3**.



Aerials Update

The restructuring of drone laws means new opportunities for the use of aerials in general production - **more on page 4**.



Perfect Podcasts

The Podcast market may be saturated but there's still plenty of scope to make your mark. **Why not let us help you build your podcast empire?**

Up to now, the novelty of streaming has saved a lot of output from critical scrutiny but as the technology enables ever greater scope for professional levels of production, so the level of expectation will shift. **Quality will be a prerequisite, especially for organisations with a brand image to maintain**, simply in order to match standards being set by broadcasters, who are using streaming more and more.

Live streaming is no longer just a social media phenomenon, where celebrities share the immediacy of a moment, 'citizen journalists' share breaking news or sports events broadcast the scene of a winner crossing the line. It's also now an established communications tool, which makes it all the more important to differentiate creative or promotional content from simple video calling.

STREAMING FOR SPORT

With only a few high profile sports enjoying real sustainable mainstream TV coverage that generates revenue, **streaming is the key that can open up both audience engagement and sustainable commercial income** for those other sports not currently sitting at the main table.

Unlike the broadcast route, Live Streaming gives sports organisations the ability to be in complete control of their own output and, most importantly, to introduce elements and components that can bring in revenue. Initially, this might simply cover the cost of producing the stream but as audiences build, so too can the income potential streams create.

The key is to move away simply from sharing a live image (usually generated on a mobile phone) that is a single view feed, to programming that would be recognisable as broadcast output, with multiple live cameras, presenters and pre-produced VT elements.



So much of live streaming sports content to this point has been about sharing one camera, one viewpoint, one moment but it doesn't have to be so limited.

With the right programming focus - concentrating on formats that can work well with a streaming production rig and with engaging talent to present and commentate, **competitions and other activities can be streamed with real visual value, replicating what viewers might expect to see on traditional TV.**

But it is the ability to mix pre-produced components into the stream - highlights packages, format explainers and, most valuably, sponsor promotion and commercial advertising - that really opens up the value of streaming for so many sports. A single sport can replicate broadcast coverage of its competitions and enjoy complete freedom to shape the broadcast and control how it plays out.

What's more, **the content will be more easily accessible by a wider audience, increasing exposure** and the scope to generate advertising and sponsorship revenue to cover costs is very strong.

OUR STREAMING PRODUCTION SERVICE

Within our Streaming Production package, we provide up to **three professional full HD broadcast cameras**, lighting for presenters, microphones for all three cameras and for any off screen commentators/narrators. We can build your broadcast beforehand with **pre-produced video content, graphics slides and photographs** and overlay other graphics on top of the live footage.

We supply the complete filming and production mixing rig with a Director to cut the broadcast live, so all you need to do is do whatever it is you want to do. Oh and **we can record all the cameras individually to give footage to repurpose afterwards**.

Rates start from **just £450 (introductory rate) per day/session + costs & VAT**



COVID PRODUCTION

When you watch a news item or see an interview filmed during the Covid-19 pandemic, you might think that TV and video production had some major barriers to overcome. There were lots of long poles with microphones and broadcasters falling over themselves to show they were doing the right thing. **But in reality, for the practicalities of filming talking heads or interviews, the pandemic didn't and still doesn't impact much at all, in terms of how we film what we need.**

Those long microphone poles have always been used to get good audio - they weren't a new technique to cope with social distancing. **We try to keep cameras as far from contributors as possible, as a matter of principle because the footage looks better!** All the images of news crews holding poles or with equipment in view were purely to show that they were doing the right thing, it wasn't an inevitable consequence of filming during a pandemic.

“Some situations are intrinsically more risky than others”

On every shoot where we're filming contributor interviews, we'll position the camera at least two metres from the contributor and we'll also use a pole to get the microphone close to them. **Then, we frame the shot so that the viewer can't see all this paraphernalia** (because, let's face it, it doesn't look pretty). If we want to show two people talking in the interview, we then simply film a segment of them talking without all our kit in shot, to place over the top of dialogue.



Of course PPE and disinfecting kit after every shoot was a new element but **we risk assess every shoot already, so this was really just one more box to tick.** We would always use both face masks and full face visors to give maximum protection both to our crew and to any contributors. Where possible, all filming would take place outside but where that's not possible, we minimise risk by clearing people from rooms prior to filming a specific sequence and then ventilating the room afterwards. We also double up on our personal PPE and disinfect any touch points when filming is complete.

Some situations are intrinsically more risky than others and **the need to ensure contributors are not put in harms way is always at the top of our list.** It is true that the restrictions lockdowns impose severely limit what's possible but other than that, the fundamentals of how we operate with people when filming hasn't been impacted by the pandemic at all.



COVID PRODUCTION PRINCIPLES

Producing during pandemic restrictions doesn't have to be limiting or stressful. **The fundamentals of production already provide a framework for creating content under a whole variety of difficult situations,** from bad weather to 'challenging' talent. It's simply a question of focusing on what really matters.

Health and safety is obviously paramount but so too is creativity in your approach. **Where there are limitations or restrictions, seek different ways to achieve an outcome.** This doesn't just mean using Zoom instead of filming, it could mean building narrative in a different way - with text or a voice over. **The key is not just to replicate an outcome using a different method but to completely rethink what your options are from the ground up,** as though the alternatives have never existed. That way, something truly original can come from the process.

UP, UP AND AWAY!

New rules around drone flight in the UK bring benefits

At the beginning of the year, new regulations around drone operations were introduced in the UK, ironically to bring our regulations in line with the EU position.

Increasingly, the view from governments is that the focus should be on the kind of activity being conducted rather than simply whether flight is commercial or not.

What this means in practice is that drone flight can now take place in a commercial situation by any operator, it is only when there are certain circumstances, mainly relating to the proximity of filming to built up areas or within controlled settings that more stricter rules kick in.

Up to now, aerials for all commercial uses, including productions for clients, were required by law to be conducted by fully CAA approved and qualified pilots and operators. This was never a problem in terms of deploying flights for productions, it simply meant that a fully qualified pilot needed to be added on to the crew.

Drone specialists who also filmed at ground level obviously had an advantage in this respect but the benefits of this approach were limited because their primary area of expertise was always flight, which carries its own specialist requirements and overheads, making them less cost effective for productions where flight wasn't essential.

Now, with the new regulations in place, drones can be flown by any crew member within a commercial production, where the flight meets basic criteria and it is only those projects that perhaps have specialist technical flight requirements that will need the highest level of CAA compliance.



In practical terms, **this gives significant scope to build value to any production where aerials might add something visually but where there isn't a technical need for aerial footage** to make the production work. This change would allow for 'establishing' aerial shots for instance to place a location in the landscape or would be of immense value to adventure sports and other rural genres.

“What this means in practice is that drone flight can now take place in a commercial situation by any operator”

This won't affect the scope of aerial production and CAA approved pilots will still be needed to film more specialist footage but it now clears the path for drones to be used to add value within a basic production

BASIC AERIALS WITH ALL SHOOTS

In response to the new regulations, **we've added basic aerials to all Mediapack shoots** (where conditions allow and criteria are met). This will enable establishing shots of a general location for practically all clients but also, for those engaged in rural pursuits, adventure sports and outdoors activities, it means that in a large number of situations we **will be able to build more creative aerials into production without additional cost.**

It is only those productions where aerial filming would need to take place in a controlled environment, within built up areas or for close profiling of commercial premises, that CAA qualified crew would be needed.

Of course, flight can also take place indoors without any flight restrictions - in factories, warehouses or sports facilities.

