ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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How to take care of the audio of your eLearning courses

When creating an online course, there is a tendency to take great care of the graphics and underestimate the audio component. Find out how to record quality audio streams.

When we **create eLearning courses** we tend to take much more care of the graphic part, often underestimating the audio component.

For this reason, within this article, I will explain why it is important to go beyond the visual aspect, looking for the result not only aesthetically but, above all, acoustically.

The ear also wants its part

Too often it happens that multimedia content creators "settle" for a decent result in terms of sound quality, often and often setting a low quality of audio conversion on their courses.

This is definitely a mistake! It may seem trite to repeat it but, in an audiovisual product, audio and video are of equal importance and it is important to know how to balance them.

We must therefore be careful in our productions, necessarily giving some value to the audio and trying to bring home the best possible result.

With the growth of smartworking and telecommuting, people have begun to invest in sophisticated or good quality tools to isolate themselves from the home environment and focus on their computer activities.

This is why we have seen a particular growth in the purchase of monitors and laptops but, more importantly, devices such as headphones and headsets, wireless and wired.

The recent headphones for sale on the market, even the cheapest ones, allow for a particular quality of sound, which was not the case in the past unless one spent a few extra pennies to grab a very high quality product.

With the arrival of wireless devices, which are also useful for listening to music on one's smartphones, people have begun to invest even sums over a hundred euros to purchase devices such as headphones and earbuds, maturing a market of people who have markedly increased their listening ability and taste compared to a few years ago.

In summary, much more often, you will notice or be made to notice that the audio of your courses is not well balanced in volume, often goes into saturation (croaks), or does not have the quality befitting a professional product.

Thus, the reason must be sought upstream and not downstream: it is not the headphones that have very good quality but, most likely, our audio was recorded or edited incorrectly.

To remedy this problem, it is first necessary to divide the topic into two macrocategories: recording and audio editing.

In this article we will focus on the recording phase.

Recording audio in the studio or outdoors

If you are dissatisfied with the audio of your eLearning productions, the reason therefore lies in your upstream behavior.

When it comes to recording an audio stream (especially when you **record an interview for your eLearning course**) you need to pay attention to three basic elements: recording quality, environment, and, most importantly, tools used to record.

When we record an interview outdoors, using the built-in microphone of our camera (or, worse, with the smartphone microphone at a high distance from the subject!), on a breezy autumn day, you will bring home, 9 times out of 10, a bad result. I therefore recommend that you equip yourself with at least **4 tools to properly record the audio stream for your eLearning courses**.

MICROPHONE

Do not underestimate the purchase of a professional or semi-professional microphone. This applies whether you need a microphone to connect to your computer or a microphone to associate with your video shooting tool-there are excellent external microphones for smartphones, too!

There are microphones for all budgets but, in my opinion, you will need to equip yourself with:

- a **Dynamic Broadcast cardioid studio microphone** with an anti-shock system and anti-pop filter (to prevent all the p's and b's from ruining your recording. There are several types on the market, my advice is to buy a usb one to avoid buying a mixer and sound card to connect to your PC or Mac;
- a **Directional microphone** for DSLR and "shotgun" Cameras that will allow you to get clear audio recordings focused toward your subject. This microphone attaches to the camera mount, has no batteries and has, usually, systems that prevent noise from camera "movement."
- a **lavalier microphone** i.e., the famous "flea" to attach to your smartphone or a recorder that can record the audio stream either wired or wirelessly. Again, there are products for all budgets but, my advice, is to go for products with the good old cable: you will not be able to continuously check the connection of your microphone and, with the wireless mode, you can easily lose the connection and throw away minutes (if not hours!) of recording.

A professional or semi-professional microphone is therefore a real must-have to ensure you get quality work with greater sound fidelity.

RECORDER

The audiovisual market is full of recorders of different types, but the choice always falls on those most popular among video makers and content producers.

All you need to do is a google search to discover the top-rated ones, and with quick setups, you will be able to use one of these recorders that can give your eLearning course content production a nice boost.

I, for example, tend to use a recorder as my first choice for recording an audio stream.

I specifically own two that I recommend:

- A **small recorder** with one or, at most, two inputs and a headphone output. This recorder is really handy to keep in your pocket to check the audio or, as I often do, you can entrust it to your interviewee who will keep it on their desk or in their pocket during the interview. This kind of recorder is really easy to use: you set the format (mp3 or wav), press the rec button, and you're already recording.
- If you are interested in recording multiple audio streams and want a multitrack recording, my advice is to get a **mixer with a built-in recorder**. There are several solutions on the market and they will allow you to record multiple subjects at once. These products also usually work as a sound card, so you can pair them with an XLR output microphone to use in the studio or on the go.

DEADCAT OR WINDSHIEL

When it comes to shooting video outdoors, you can't do without these two accessories to record quality audio without rustling or noise from vibration and too much movement.

Without getting too much into technicalities (the web is really full of detailed information, especially when buying), the Deadcat is a wind filter that is designed and built to reduce noise when recording. Are you recording a video in which your seafood expert tells you about trawling directly on the fishing boat? You might want to mount a deadcat on your microphone, a product made with an artificial fur part (it looks just like a feline) that allows the wind to glide along its surface, preventing unwanted audio spikes from being recorded.

When we talk about windshiel, on the other hand, it is an accessory used for shotgun microphones up to 325mm in length that allows for a reduction in noise caused by wind and microphone shifting during use.

This is a professional solution to be paired with telescopic pole to reach actors or interviewees who are far from the camera.

GOOD QUALITY CABLES

You have already purchased quite a bit of equipment for your recordings but, perhaps, forgot to purchase a good quality cable!

Buying a professional or semi-professional cable can make all the difference in your audio recording.

Very often, when we hear "skips" or noise in our recording, it is probably due to a faulty or low-quality cable. Not to mention the cheap ones bought in the little store that sells a little bit of everything for electronics and home.

It is really important to equip yourself with plenty of cables to carry in a bag or suitcase dedicated to audio accessories. Be very careful about the care of these tools! They tend to get damaged very quickly if bent or stressed too much.

If you have taken all these basic little precautions but your audio is still not convincing yourself or your clients, the problem is probably in the editing stage.

More tips for the editing stage of your eLearning course content will follow.

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