

School Documentary Blog – Complete Coverage

28th March 2006

I'm currently doing a movie in my school, a documentary about the school I'm going in compared to other schools. I'm showing both good and bad aspects of the school, and yesterday I filmed over an hour of film (should be cut down of course to about 3-4 minutes). So far I have filmed 23 minutes today of random schoolwork. I've tried to interview a few people, but no-one seems to take the whole thing seriously or they don't know?!

I mean, a question like: "What's the best thing with this school?" shouldn't be too hard to answer, right. Anyway I'm going to interview a few people this afternoon and hopefully I will be able to film in Gym Class...

Might post the completed movie here when it's done, as well as all the junk I've managed to film. It's strange how people behave when in front of a camera, even if it's a documentary, even if they will get cut out...

The completed movie should be about 10-15 minutes long and it's all filmed on the XL1s (planning to sell my other cameras since I have a lot of accessories for the Canon). My computer is a bit buggy at the moment which is quite boring, it stopped when I tried to import an hour of footage yesterday (it stopped at 0:57:00 :P). Something about a file being spread out the harddrive. Well, it should be fixed now. More updates on this project soon...

3rd April 2006

Well, here is the next installment of the School Documentary blog. Wohoo! Well, I have now filmed 2 and a half hour of material for the schoolmovie. I cut a total of two minutes (yeah, I know) in last week's Thursday and Friday. I viewed it to some friends in school today and got quite positive response. But when I looked through the filmed material today I noticed that I didn't know where to continue with my editing. So I decided to write a "cutting script" and work after that. After 2 hours of cutting I ended up with over 3 minutes of cut material!

It contains quite a lot of Magic Bullet (I love grading :)) so I'm afraid I can't show it to you right now, but I will probably view it to you on the evening on Wednesday (GMT +1). It's getting really good and interesting, with some nice people and a few joking over-dramatic things, hehe. I'm going to continue on the movie tomorrow.

25th April 2006

Here is another blog entry about the work with my school documentary. Last week I went filming at my old school. It was really nice since people didn't pay any great attention to the camera, they just acted normally. It's really different at my current school. As soon as people see the camera, they get mental. They want to be in the movie a bit "too much" (funky dancing in front of the camera is a rather good example). I filmed about half an hour today, then the tape ended and I noticed that I didn't bring any spares. Smart. The film is currently 4 minutes and about 30 seconds (some places are blank, I just need to insert the footage I filmed last week).

10th May 2006

Hey everyone! Here is part 4 of my school documentary blog. I am creating a movie for my school and have been doing this since late February...

Well, today I worked with replacing some of the text in the movie with actual filmed footage which makes the movie look more complete. I have also worked on grading for the movie, and some shots turns out to look completely god-like. *Epic Sound* Today it's two weeks until the movie has to be finished. Unless something completely unexpected happens I will be able to make that date, probably a few days before that. So, I havn't really added any new material (just about 40-50 sec) to the total length, I have now focused on finishing the first 4 and a ½ minutes of the 10 minute film. Everyfilm is basically shot so the only thing left is cutting (going through around 9 hours of footage). I will probably upload the movie at the end of May, beginning of June here so you all can watch it. Next thing I'm going to do is to take the first 4 ½ minutes to school to get some response from teachers and students, and then cut the last 5 minutes of it. I also need to find a voice-over talent for my movie, since I absolutely won't speak myself!! :P

15th May 2006

Well, what can I say? The school documentary has been completely edited and turned out to be a tiny bit shorter than I first thought, just above 7 minutes. The editing work has really been completely mind-breaking and often a bit boring. I totalled out at 15 hours of raw material which I have watched (yes, I fast-forwarded the weird bits). Well, the editing started at the beginning of March this year. I worked on one edit for about 3 weeks, but then I decided to scrap it all and re-edit everything since it didn't turn out that good. Well, 8 weeks later (and 12 hours of basically pure cr*p) the movie is finished. Well, to be honest, not completely finished. I have the music and speaker-voice left to add in the movie. I hope to have made almost every music bit by tomorrow evening and then later this week I'll record the speaker-voice (using some person at school probably).

Now that I watch the movie it's not really as commercialistic as I first thought (read: feared) it would be. It's more a movie about my school with a bit of things I like, such as really extreme grading :D. Speaking of which, I havn't learned how to export from Vegas without any video filters added yet. This resulted in today's rendering time being close to 5 hours (for 7 minutes of video!). I have to get a quicker grading solution once I film Showdown this summer. I mean, imagine if the movie is 30 minutes long and incorporates a LOT of grading. Now that would mean 3 times the length at two times the resolution. Eww. Well, it has so far been a very nice project to embark upon this far and it's going to be cool to share it with all of you when I release it for public viewing (with english subtitles of course) at the beginning of June right here at rhp.se.

21st May 2006

Well, the planning for Redhawk Productions' most ambitious project so far actually started last year, September 2005. At a small conversation with my teacher he said that they thought of making a special school project for people who are basically finished with the primary school. As I luckily was. I worked on at normal rate in school and did a small project with some electronics in it at the start of this year. After that I started planning and setting up what the movie should be about and how it should be made. Since my school has changed my life a lot I thought of creating a commercial-based "fan-film" which then evolved into an informative film about my school. I started planning in early February this year and it was really cool to work with something you enjoyed doing otherwise too! (And we are talking about school here :D) Well, anyway I wrote a small essay too concerning how you make a film, basically covering every aspect of pre-production, production, post-production and distribution. It got really good and after making that I felt I was ready to get on with the filming.

I started filming late February, early March and the first day's footage was a complete mess. People either making attempts for staying or getting out of frame leaves a really weird message. Now that I think of it, I may have only used about 8 seconds that I shot during the first week. That was how chaotic it were. The next week was better, since my fellow students eventually got used to having a camera around in lessons and filming when they work. Heh, I even think some teachers might have liked having the camera around since most people (read: students) behave better when they know they're being filmed. In theory. No, people actually behaved the same way they did before I brought the camera along which actually made the footage really natural and not as staged as it otherwise might have looked.

After around 2 ½ weeks of filming I was off to film some footage at my old school, to show the difference between the learning method used at the schools. This was really nice. The teachers and the students treated me really well (probably since the teachers knew me and the students didn't). I filmed there for 2 days, getting 2 ½ hours of great material which basically could have been used for creating a movie about that school as well. Heh, well the material used in the film is about 13 seconds long so...well, better safe than sorry I guess!

After this I was back filming in school. Shot some good (and bad) interviews with both old and young students and asked them what they thought about the learning method and what they thought was best with the school. I also started the tough job of cutting everything around here. In about 5 days I cut a 4 minute movie which had lots of cool animations and stuff in it, but unless you were me you couldn't understand anything. I watched it a couple of times and took some notes. I changed a few things (Battle without Honour or Humanity is not really a song to start a documentary with) and tweaked a few clips but I kept coming back to the fact that the best thing to do would be to cut it again from the ground up. So I did that, and the moment I clicked the "New Project..." button in Vegas I knew it was going to take a very long time.

I got back to school and filmed some shots which I thought was necessary to keep the movie at a good level, such as exterior shots and wide angles. I also filmed some stuff with the schools corridors basically completely emptied, but I don't think I used any of those shots at all. This movie is about life, not fairly uninteresting table lamp shapes. After a few days of doing this (at the end of April) I thought: "Well, I guess I've got everything now. Let's cut!". I had already cut about 50% of the movie which made it really harder to know what to cut next. I had basically cut everything interesting and told every interesting thing. But...I hadn't. So the next weeks I cut the rest of the movie until about 2 weeks ago when I realised that the movie was finished, which resulted in a foolish amount of exclamation marks in my MSN profile. But wait...where is the music? Where is the Voice-Over? Right now the voice-over only existed from text written on screen (taking over about 79% of available space). The music...well, that just didn't exist at all.

The next step was a weird one. I decided to be a man and create all the music myself. When I had made about 12 seconds of material that sounded like Santa Claus-rave on repeat, I quickly changed my mind. I found some old (and some new) tracks and inserted these into the movie. Mission: Impossible theme at end credits is a good example of some of the weird music choices I made. And it's still in the film. After about two days of work the music was finished, so the next step was to get the voice-over out of the question. There was only 1 week to go until the movie had to be released (well, it was last Wednesday). After doing a bit of consulting with Andreas Jendin (the founder of AJPictures) I realised I didn't need a new mic for the camera at all. I was just recording the sound all wrong. So after a few sound tests I was off to school to record a voice-over for the movie (no, it absolutely couldn't be me). I recorded a few lines with Alexander on the morning, but later (at lunch time) found out that some of the lines were missing. I was about 3 seconds close to making my dad have the voice-over when the brilliant idea of going back to school came to my head.

So I went back to school and this time grabbed five people to record the voice-over (oh, plus Oliver and Teo, who really wasn't recording anything, they basically screamed and sang the Mission: Impossible theme - Mental edition again and again). The five people was Filip, Alexander, Johannes, Christoffer (The BBQ) and Emiliano. They read the lines I gave them one by one in the order I just wrote and by the time we were done I had recorded 18 minutes of frenetic screaming and 2 minutes of real voice-over. That afternoon I spent completely on just getting the movie done and finished before the day was over. I did the end titles and added the voice-over lines to the movie. After that I "had" to add a lot of nice Magic Bullet grading to everything. That decision resulted in a 7 hour render for the movie. When the movie finally was rendered and completed I looked at it and realised the movie was actually finished. I quickly burned a back-up DVD with the movie on it (in case the computer suffers from a unbelievable failure to work). The only thing I now have left to do is to export it to a DVD disc which can be played in DVD players and I'll view it this Wednesday at school, the 24th of May.

I guess you now almost know more than me about this project, so I guess I really don't have anything more to write except I probably won't write a text this long until Showdown is released (even though that text will basically consist of a big amount of exclamation marks). Of course you can expect regular news updates as usual. You'll be able to see the movie here on the website soon. Don't know how soon though, struggling with my webspace at the moment (need more than 150 mb). But I'm aiming for the beginning of June. Well, I hope you enjoyed reading this. Until next time!

*does Funky Dance