

A DIY GUIDE TO PLANNING, SHOOTING,  
AND SHARING GREAT VIDEO  
FROM *USA TODAY TALKING TECH* HOST

# VIDEO NATION

JEFFERSON GRAHAM



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Press

**Video Nation**

A DIY guide to planning, shooting, and sharing great video from USA TODAY's Talking Tech host  
**Jefferson Graham**

**Peachpit Press**

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*To my wife, Ruth, and my parents, Jerry and Judy.*

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Jefferson Graham** is a longtime technology columnist for *USA TODAY* and host, producer and editor of the *USA TODAY*'s "Talking Tech" and "Talking Your Tech" video shows, which feature interviews with tech newsmakers, reviews of the latest gadgets, and celebrity visits. Apple products such as the iPad, iPhone, and Final Cut Pro X were seen early on "Talking Tech," one of a small handful of outlets to get early peeks at the new Apple releases. Recent guests on "Talking Your Tech" have included Selena Gomez, Carson Daly, and Jeff Dunham; tech stars such as Zynga CEO Mark Pincus and Pandora's Tim Westergren; and, YouTube breakouts iJustine and the Annoying Orange himself, Dane Boedigheimer. All the shows are produced professionally on the same DIY budgets described in this book.

Jefferson is the author of nine books, including *Vegas: Live and In Person* and *Salesman of the Century* (with infomercial legend Ron Popeil). He is also an accomplished Manhattan Beach, California-based portrait photographer, videographer, and jazz guitarist.



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# INTRODUCTION

All kinds of people today are creating video for the web. Whether you're a small business owner, a blogger, or a web show host, or if you're simply doing some marketing for your company or yourself, right now you may be all on your own in learning how to put that video together, make it look good, and get it to go viral.

Learning filmmaking and production techniques can be a daunting task because most books and resources cover productions with big budgets and multiple crew members. Resources that cover only the camera or video editing aren't particularly helpful either if you don't know the basics about video production.

This is where *Video Nation* comes in. I wrote this book to provide the layman with real-world, practical advice, from what I learned over the years producing a minimum of two videos per week on a DIY budget for *USA TODAY*'s "Talking Tech" and "Talking Your Tech" shows.

In this book, you'll learn what equipment you need to get started to create your own "one-man band" productions, including advice on shooting with DSLRs, point-and-shoot cameras, and iPhones. You'll get the best techniques for setting up, preparing questions for, and interviewing a subject. I've included detailed descriptions of working with sound and lighting for a variety of indoor and outdoor scenarios. You'll even get to take your video to the next level by using multiple cameras.

Once you've shot your video, I give you step-by-step instructions for using editing programs such as Apple iMovie, Adobe Premiere Elements, and Final Cut Pro X. After that, you'll learn how to upload your video to YouTube, create a channel, market your video with Twitter and Facebook, and earn money from your efforts. Throughout the book, you'll get tips on developing fresh new ways to promote your business or yourself.

It's my hope that, after reading the book, you'll know how to create videos that look professional and also raise your profile in your business or your personal endeavors.

## Videos Accompanying the Book

Throughout *Video Nation*, TV icons (such as the one shown in the margin here) indicate a video clip is available for you to watch. You can download the clips once you register your book at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation). More than 30 clips are available to show some of the concepts from the book in action, including how to set up a shoot, get better audio results, light an interview subject, and edit your video. You'll also see some behind-the-scenes videos of interviews with Mike Tyson, Adam Carolla, Valerie Bertinelli, Penn Jillette, J.B. Smoove, and more.

I'll add more videos to the resources page at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation), so make sure to check back for additional videos.



Each numbered video corresponds to an accompanying short video clip at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation).



# HOW TO USE YOUR GEAR

# 4



**NOW THAT YOU** have an idea of your video gear options and what might work for you, you're eager to get started, right? Let's take a quick look at how to use your gear for video—mobile phones and devices, point-and-shoot cameras, video cameras, or digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) cameras. There are a few good apps and some hardware I'll recommend along the way. If you already know the basics about your camera, feel free to skip over this chapter.



# THE IPHONE

So you want to use your iPhone as a video camera? No problem, but you'll need an iPhone 4 or iPhone 4S—the two models with the improved camera—and a few dollars to spend for a handful of creative apps that will take your videomaking to the next level.

Here's the iPhone 4S advantage: You get an excellent 8-megapixel camera that rivals any point-and-shoot—and it's always with you. Be sure to shoot in decent light for best results. You'll also want to stabilize the iPhone in some way (see Chapter 3). Whether it's the Owle mCAMLITE or the Studio Neat Glif iPhone Tripod Mount, it doesn't really matter. Just be sure to keep the camera as steady as possible.

## Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPhone

Let's go through the basic steps of shooting a video with the iPhone.

- 1 On your iPhone's home screen, select Settings then turn on Airplane mode (Figure 4.1). That way, no one will bother you with a call, text, or status update while you're shooting.

**Figure 4.1** Set the iPhone to airplane mode so you won't be interrupted during shooting.





**Figure 4.2**  
Make sure to shoot with your phone in a horizontal position. As you can see, when the iPhone is vertical, the sides of the image are cut off.

- 2 Open the Camera app on the iPhone. Slide the Camera icon to Movie mode.
- 3 Hold the camera horizontally. This is crucial. Shooting vertically is one of the biggest mistakes I see. Because the video plays back in a horizontal orientation, you'll lose the sides of your video and have annoying black bars and a teeny image in the middle (Figure 4.2).
- 4 Click the red Record button at the bottom of the screen to start recording video. Click the button again to stop recording.

When shooting, try to keep your hands as steady as possible if you're not using a tripod mount. Also, hold the camera as close as possible to your subject (if you bypassed the microphone option) to do your best to pick up sound.

When the take is finished, the clip will go directly to the Camera Roll area of the iPhone, where photos and videos are stored.

## Simple Steps for Shooting with the iPad

Shooting video with the iPad is just as easy:

- 1 Tap the camera icon on your iPad's home screen.
- 2 On the bottom-right corner you'll find a toggle. Tap it to switch it to the right, on the video icon.

You'll also see the button that switches between the front, FaceTime camera, and the rear, iSight camera.



Learn how to connect a microphone to the iPhone by watching the video at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation).

- 3 In the middle of the right side of the screen (and next to the home button) you'll see the record button. Tap this to start recording. Tap it again to end recording.
- 4 To watch the video you just recorded, tap the thumbnail in the lower-left corner. You can also find the video in your Camera Roll area.

## Apps for the iPhone and iPad

Numerous apps on the market let you tweak the image results from your still or video camera in the iPhone or iPad. There are just as many if not more apps that are available to assist you in your productions. I'll cover just a few of these here.

**NOTE** All of these applications are also available for the iPod Touch.

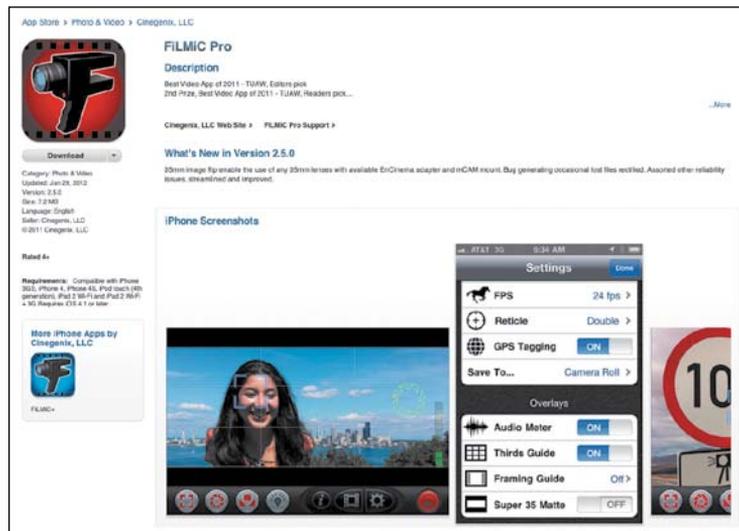
### Filmic Pro

One big drawback of shooting video on the iPhone is that you can't adjust the exposure as you can with a "real" camera. There are no f-stop or shutter-speed settings. That's where Filmic Pro comes in (Figure 4.3). With this \$3 app, you can tweak exposure slightly, opt for variable frame rates, and get audio-monitoring levels and focus options that you wouldn't have if you just zapped open the Camera app on the iPhone. For the exposure, it will never be as accurate as a camera with f-stops. Instead, you get a selective circle that you place over a section of the image to make it darker or lighter. It's not perfect, but it's better than nothing. Beyond saving the project to the Camera Roll, you also get presets to upload it directly to a variety of sites, including Vimeo, YouTube, Dropbox, and Facebook.



Watch the video at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation) to discover how to adjust exposure using Filmic Pro

**Figure 4.3** The Filmic Pro app for the iPhone is essential for anyone shooting with an iPhone.





**Figure 4.4** Almost DSLR is a great app for locking focus and exposure, setting white balance, adding GPS data to pictures, and much more.

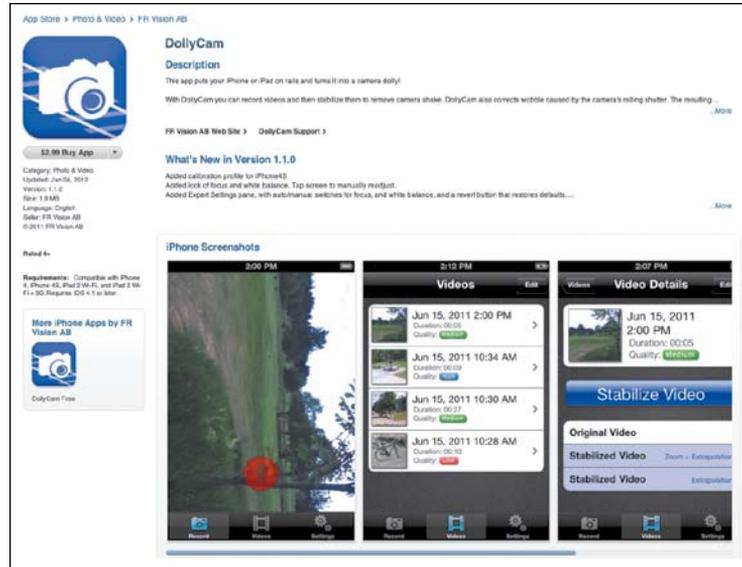
## Almost DSLR

As with Filmic Pro, with this \$2 app you can adjust and lock focus and exposure, plus tweak white balance, adjust frame rate, and click on a self-timer (Figure 4.4). I recommend this app for anyone who has an iPhone and wants to shoot short films.

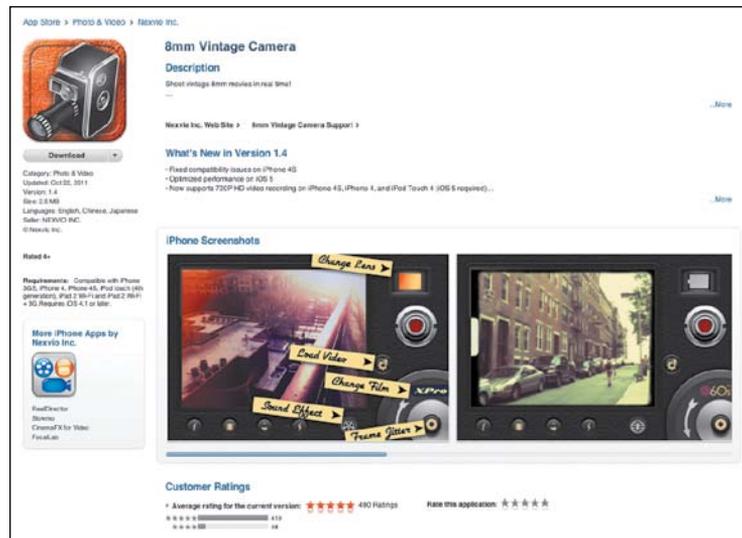
## DollyCam

It's hard to keep any camera steady without a tripod, and the iPhone is no exception. There's no grip to grab onto the device, as you have with a camera, and every twitch and itch shows up loud and shakily clear when you're shooting video. So we welcome the DollyCam app with open arms (Figure 4.5). It's not an expensive mount, or a slider to drool over, like the \$130 iPhone Mobislider, but for \$3, DollyCam turns your iPhone into a steadycam by stabilizing your image, and it does an amazing job. You start off by shooting your video the normal way—trying to keep it as steady as possible—and then, when the take is finished, you process it, which can take a few minutes. Once it's complete—voilà, the video actually looks as if it was shot on a tripod. It's that steady. I love this app.

**Figure 4.5** Use the DollyCam app for extra stabilization.



**Figure 4.6** The 8mm Vintage Camera app is one of many that gives you an old film look to your videos.



## 8mm Vintage Camera

For just under \$2, you can add many arty and really cool looks to your videos, from rickety 1920s (like an old silent movie) to faded-color 1960s, saturated 1980s, and moody black-and-white noir (Figure 4.6). If you use the 8mm Vintage Camera app, be sure to go to Settings in the app and save your processed video in the Camera Roll section, so you'll be able to find it later.

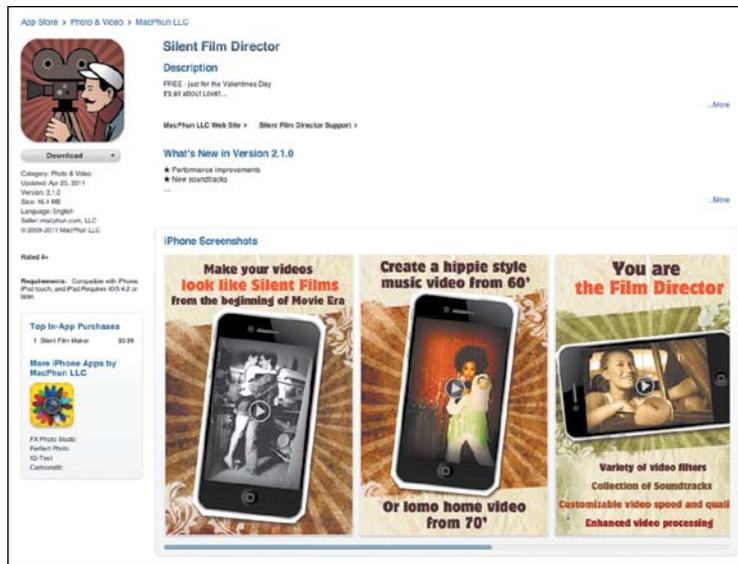


Figure 4.7 Silent Movie Director is another fun app for videomaking.

## Silent Movie Director

Similar to 8mm Vintage Camera, this \$2 app turns your preexisting videos into vintage productions, with scratchy 1920s and 1930s looks, sepia, and faded color (Figure 4.7). If you're a fan of Hollywood's Golden Age, as I am, you'll love this app. A cute image of Charlie Chaplin pops up while you wait for your video to be transformed into something that resembles a relic of yesteryear. A cool speed control icon lets you make your footage really, really fast (think Keystone Kops) or slow. So if you're into these kinds of special effects, Silent Movie is probably the better choice for you than 8mm Vintage Camera. Once you get into the app, you're encouraged to buy more goodies, such as Silent Movie title cards and Silent Movie fonts.

## Clapperboard

Big-time movies usually begin their productions with a clapperboard, which gives the sound engineers the sound they need to sync up the audio with the visuals. Should you want to mix iPhone footage with footage from another video source, or shoot one angle and mix it with another, one of these apps—and there are several in the iTunes App Store—will get you that slate and clapper sound. A basic clapperboard can be as inexpensive as \$.99. MoveSlate costs more at \$24.99 but it has a great interface and is an all-in-one digital slate, clapperboard, shot log, and notepad (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Use a clapperboard on the iPhone to sync up your audio.



## iMovie

The iPhone app version of iMovie, Apple's popular video-editing software for computers, has been slimmed down to let you do basic edits on your iPhone and iPad footage. You can also add graphics, titles, and preprogrammed music.

The iMovie app is a must for “run and gun” footage—video that has been shot really quickly—and for doing a zippy edit with titles at the beginning and end, and the app can be used with the iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad. But be warned: Getting the hang of making precise edits with the app takes some getting used to—you have to pinch the clips with two fingers—and the cuts are nowhere near as smooth as with a mouse.

## POINT-AND-SHOOT CAMERAS

One easy reason to explain the immense popularity of point-and-shoot cameras is their simplicity. The models that feature the best ease-of-use have minimal buttons or choices: All you need to do is turn them on, compose your image, and start shooting.



**Figure 4.9** If you're using a point-and-shoot camera, get a hefty size memory card for video files, which are huge. I recommend a 16 GB card at the minimum.

Videomaking with point-and-shoot cameras has evolved over the years, from limited ten-second silent clips to low-resolution video with sound, to 720p HD, and now full 1080p HD on many of the top camera models from Canon, Nikon, Sony, and others (for my specific recommendations, see Chapter 3).

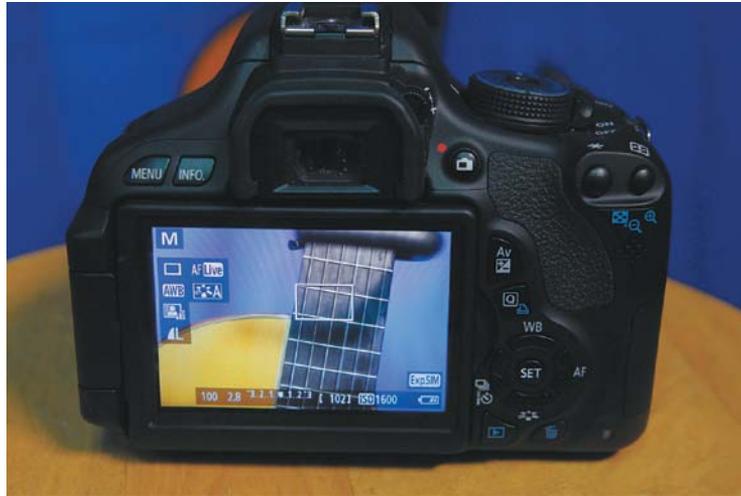
Taking videos is insanely simple and pretty uniform on point-and-shoot cameras. Look for either the red record button on the back of the camera and/or the movie camera icon on the mode dial. Either of those will get you going.

One tool you will definitely need is a big fat memory card. At top resolution, video files eat up a lot of memory. I recommend at minimum a 16 GB card (Figure 4.9), which will cost you about \$30 and give you at least an hour's worth of footage. It's not just more storage that the heftier card gives you—it also lets you shoot longer clips. When buying the card, make sure it's a high-speed card, Class 10 or higher, since you'll need the added oomph to keep up with video files.

The Kodak PlaySport cameras—which stopped production in 2012 but are still easily found in stores—have touch-screen controls, so don't go searching for the red record button, it's not there. Instead, just press play on the back of the camera to start recording. These cameras also have built-in tools to trim clips and share to sites such as YouTube and Facebook.

Unlike the iPhone, the PlaySport and Flip cameras are intended to be used in the vertical position, which won't affect your final video. Once the video is recorded, it will still display horizontally.

**Figure 4.10** You'll want to learn how to check and adjust your focus on your DSLR for different effects.



## DSLR CAMERAS

For cinema-like results, nothing beats shooting on a digital SLR. The size of the image sensor can be 20 times larger than what's found in a video camera, resulting in a brighter, crisper, and more HD-looking image. Put a beautiful fast lens on the camera at its maximum f-stop—like f/2.0 or f/2.8—and the background goes out of focus for a wonderful image with a dreamy quality (Figure 4.10).

However, making videos on DSLRs such as the Canon EOS Rebel line can be a frustrating experience for a beginner, even though the final result can look amazing if you held the camera steady with a tripod and have the hang of how to keep the Rebel T3i or older models in focus. The newest Rebel, the T4i, addresses focus issues, but earlier versions don't stay in focus once you start recording and move your position. It can be a challenge. Here's how to focus with the older Rebel T3i and other DSLRs like it:

- 1 For the Rebel T3i, start by clicking the movie button on the back of the camera by the red dot. This sets the 3-inch LCD viewfinder to "live view."
- 2 You'll be composing directly on the LCD, which can be tough if you're outside in bright sun. If this is an issue, pick up an LCD shade, which could be found at any camera shop.
- 3 I usually set the lens to manual focus (on the lens, switch from A to M) because it won't stay in focus automatically. On the Rebel T3i, you set focus by pointing-and-clicking the button on the far right, the one normally used for choosing where your focus dot will go in your composition. This button lets

you magnify the image—for image-composing purposes only—and will give you a much clearer focus check.

- 4 Once filming begins, be sure to be on your toes. The subject will go out of focus if he or she moves. To prevent this, try to use a medium f-stop setting like  $f/5.6$  or  $f/8$ , which will give you more focus latitude. The image will look best at a wide opening such as  $f/2.8$ . This gives you a big, blurry background, but the amount of area in focus will be limited.

On several Sony and Nikon DSLRs, along with the Canon Rebel T4i, autofocus will stay in place when you start recording. However, finding the record button is different on these cameras. Sony has the best-marked red record button—it's even labeled *Movie*. For Nikon, there's a little lever next to the red button labeled *LV*, which stands for “Live View,” which indicates the ability to compose directly on the LCD instead of through the viewfinder.

A good tripod is a must while recording videos with DSLRs, whether it is a small camera such as the Rebel T4i or bigger cameras such as the Canon 60D and Canon 5D Mark II—the image will look way too shaky if you try handheld recording.

There are tons of accessories for DSLR cameras, but this one will probably help you more than any other: the Hoodman H-LLP3 HoodLoupe 3.0 Professional 3-inch screen loupe (Figure 4.11). Attach it to the LCD, and you'll not only be able to compose in direct sunlight, you'll also be able to fine-tune your focus because the loupe brings the image directly to your eye with 1-to-1 magnification. (Spend another \$20 for Hoodman's Cinema Strap and you won't have to hold the loupe over the LCD—it will lock in place.) Hoodman also sells a \$25 lens shade that goes directly over the LCD to block the sun.



To learn more about focusing your DSLR camera, watch the video at [www.peachpit.com/videonation](http://www.peachpit.com/videonation).



**Figure 4.11** The HoodLoupe Pro is a great investment, especially if you are shooting outdoors.

## VIDEO CAMERAS

I argued against the need for owning a full-service, legacy video camcorder for our purposes in the previous chapter, but if you already own one or are thinking of buying one, here are some usage tips.

When the Flip cameras were first introduced in 2007, Jonathan Kaplan, the chief executive of Flip-maker Pure Digital, declared that video was an opportunity because over the years, video cameras had become way too complicated with their plethora of buttons. So when Kaplan introduced the Flip, it had but a few: a red record button, a playback button, and fast forward/rewind button. That design was quite revolutionary.

In 2012, video cameras are a shadow of their former selves, and are relegated to the back of the store where they get little attention. But I'll say this for video cameras: They have become simpler to operate!

Take the Panasonic SDR-H100, for example (*Figure 4.12*). This \$200 video camera is not littered with buttons. Here's how to use it and most other similar camcorders:

- 1 Flip out the LCD preview screen to find the empty slot for your SD card. Slip it in.
- 2 Insert your external microphone into the (poorly identified) A/V slot for sound, which is next to the memory slot.
- 3 Compose your image on the LCD, and click the red button on the back of the camera to start recording.
- 4 Press the zoom button atop the camera to get closer to the action.
- 5 When you're done, click the preview button, also on top of the camera, to play it back. That's it.

Now that we've reviewed how to use your video gear and accessories, it's time to plan for your video production. So turn the page and let's dive in.



**Figure 4.12**  
Video cameras such as this one are still perfectly fine for using in your web productions and are simpler to operate than previous versions.

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