



UNIT 3C. EASUY-TO-UNDERSTAND (E2U) AND AUDIOVISUAL JOURNALISM (AVJ)

ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES

PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: INTERVIEW WITH MIKAEL HELLMAN ON CREATING E2U VIDEO CONTENT

Other Video Transcript

- Voice 1 EASIT, Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training.
- Voice 2 Unit 3c. E2U and audiovisual journalism, Element 1. What is E2U audiovisual journalism? Practical example: Interview with Mikael Hellman on creating E2U video content.
- In this video you will meet with Mikael Hellman. He is a Visual Communication Manager at Malmö City Council (Sweden) and specialized in video accessibility. We talk about creating easy to understand content and how to apply that in audiovisual journalism.
- We do not focus on E2U Subtitles or E2U Audio Description since that is covered in unit 3a and 3b. We focus on creating easy to understand content.



The images in the video are used with permission from Mikael Hellman, Malmö City Council. The interviewer is Ester Hedberg from The Swedish National Association for Dyslexia.

Ester Hedberg

We will talk about audiovisual news journalism.

That is, news broadcast on TV or online. Creating the contents is a job for journalists.

But you, Mikael, are an expert on accessibility to audiovisual media in general.

Now, you have the opportunity to share your knowledge with journalists and students of journalism.

One of the issues we would like to highlight is how they should go about reaching people in need of news in easy language.

You ran a project in which you developed a video that is accessible in a number of ways.

Can you tell me about the project?

Mikael Hellman

Yes, of course. We did this in the city of Malmö.

A few years ago, when we had a lot of theoretical background on accessibility we wanted to put into practice.

The best way was to hunker down and get started. Delve into accessibility and how it affects everyday lives.



We started a project. Here's a screen shot of our website. There's the video project. You can watch the video later.

I'm going to talk about the thoughts and ideas we had making the video.

Ester Hedberg

It's important to plan for accessibility from the beginning.

No? That's what you usually say.

Mikael Hellman

Yeah, exactly. It's one of the best takeaways.

Generally, you make a video, and then you think, "I'm going to add a bit of accessibility."

But that's really hard. You gain a lot from doing it in the planning stage. You lay a good foundation for good results.

Ester Hedberg

What should you think about when planning?

Mikael Hellman

The first thing that comes to mind is to have the contents and audience clear in your head. It's hard to just say that your audience is "everyone". Because we all have different challenges.

But you need to remind yourself to be clear in your messaging and not to include too many topics in one and the same video.

In that case, it's better to break it into other videos or broadcasts. Instead of tackling too many topics.



- Ester Hedberg But the news always deals with a bunch of different things. It's about various topics. How should journalists think?
- Mikael Hellman In the news, it's natural to talk about a bunch of different topics. But there's time in between.
- Ester Hedberg So it's clearly sectioned off in the program?
- Mikael Hellman Yeah, exactly.
- Ester Hedberg So in your planning: "Script and 'everything' worked out in detail". Speaker, graphics...
- Why does it need to be so thoroughly planned?
- Mikael Hellman That's so everyone is on the same level. From the producer to those filming and interviewing. To the journalist.
- If you already know before going out what you'll be talking about, you can do your planning in advance. You know what questions to ask, what clips you want to get, for example. Or what interview clips you want.
- You can start planning the graphics at that stage. In our project, we knew what the speaker was going to say. We thought "easy to read" and "plain language" for the speaker voice. We even knew what the person being interviewed was going to say.
- Ester Hedberg Isn't that difficult when interviewing politicians?

- Mikael Hellman Yes, absolutely. We have the benefit of control. For example when there are difficult words, we can avoid difficult words and jargon. That can be easy.
- Ester Hedberg What are your thoughts on time?
- We know that many of the people who need news in easy language, often need extra time to reflect. And to internalize what's being said and shown.
- Mikael Hellman I often hear that slow is boring. I don't think that's right. At least not in the video we made for our project.
- The people who watched it said, "Oh, how nice. Here's a nice, understandable video that talks about an exciting area."
- Slow is not the same as boring. It's just clearer and better for everyone.
- Ester Hedberg How do you deal with time? Do you go slower or do you take breaks?
- Mikael Hellman It automatically goes slower. The speaking rate is slower because the speaker intends to be clear.
- We're not meant to talk about subtitles but it has to do with them as well. We can use subtitles that appear for longer. But you can't slow things down simply for that reason. It has to go along with what's happening in the video. It slows the video down but it's much clearer.



- Ester Hedberg Let's talk a bit about simple visual language. What is it?
- Mikael Hellman It can be simple things like what you see on the screen here.
- This here is Patrik and this is taken from the project.
- Placing the interview subject in front of a calm, neutral background. Not putting the subject in a highly trafficked intersection.
- You can definitely have ambient sounds but you should try to avoid disruptive sounds. So the interview is clear.
- Ester Hedberg Your screen shot says to ask people to speak calmly, clearly and in plain language.
- How does that work when you talk to a random person on the street?
- Mikael Hellman It's a judgment you need to make. Some people speak clearly and calmly. A lot of people are stressed by being interviewed. But you can ask the person to speak more slowly. That way, it's clearer.
- Ester Hedberg In the context of news, if you interview a person who has trouble speaking understandably. Can you as the journalist narrate what they're saying? What do you think?



Mikael Hellman

That's a good way of tackling it. If you hear them use a difficult concept you can allow the journalist to explain it.

Or, you can ask the person to answer the question again but to remove the difficult word. Could be jargon, for example.

But I know with time constraints, that can be hard to do. When doing a news story, you can add a voice-over or speaker who explains its meaning.

Ester Hedberg

Speaking clearly and clear images go hand in hand, don't they?

Mikael Hellman

Yes, definitely. They go together.

It's often the visual aspects that can be adapted to make things clearer.

Here, I've listed six different parts. Both about audio components and visual components. In part, I think you should have contrasts in the audio. A simple measure is to avoid background music. Background music is often added for effect. But for a lot of the hearing impaired, it becomes garbled.

But there's a difference between music and ambient sounds. Ambient sounds can themselves be good to make a situation clearer: "Where are we?".

It can help a hearing-impaired person or a blind person understand where the journalist is.

- Ester Hedberg Could it also support those with cognitive challenges?
- Mikael Hellman Most definitely. It's easier to interpret impressions when various parts interact. We can both see and hear. It makes things much clearer.
- Ester Hedberg What happens when what you see and what's being said don't go together? How does that affect understanding?
- Mikael Hellman It can be very unclear and difficult to follow when you say one thing and show another.
- For example, the last bullet point says, "Avoid using clips when someone is talking."
- It could be that you show...
- That you hear someone talking but show images of different...
- Maybe you show a flower in a meadow near the highway. That doesn't actually have anything to do with the highway. It could get someone thinking, "Oh no! Will it impact the environment?" And similar.
- Make sure that what you talk about is what's being shown.
- Ester Hedberg But that doesn't mean...
- Ester Hedberg If you are interviewing someone who speaks unclearly, and you, the journalist, want to relay what the person is saying.



Can you nonetheless show the person who is talking while using a voice-over? Or what should you do?

Mikael Hellman

No, I don't think so. You don't want to see one person talking and hear someone else's voice. It's just all wrong.

In that case, you should cut out the parts with unclear language. The journalist can relay what the person said. And you add images that go together with what's being said.

Ester Hedberg

Okay.

Another issue I've thought about is switching between clips. It can be disturbing to have too many clips.

Mikael Hellman

Now we're back to the aspect of time. Letting the images stay on the screen so you can take in what's happening in the image before switching it out. So you understand what's happening.

Often, when clips are quick, maybe just a second or two, it just flashes by. Let the clips remain on the screen for longer. It's a matter of balancing when editing the video. Maybe you should let the clip remain for eight to ten seconds. So you can take in what's being shown.

Mikael Hellman

It also depends on the image. If it's an image of a square where people are milling around, maybe



you want to keep it shorter than if it's an image meant to tell a story.

Ester Hedberg

One of your bullets deals with keeping to chronological order, as much as possible.

Journalism generally gets right to the point:
"There was a fire..."

Mikael Hellman

Yeah.

Ester Hedberg

But when simplifying things maybe you should put it into context first?

Mikael Hellman

That can be difficult when you go out and need to do live reporting on site. In those cases, maybe the fire is still raging.

You need to have reached a certain age to understand that you can jump forward and backward in a video. It's common to start with how the video ends. And then rewind to the beginning. To spark our interest in knowing, "How did we come to that conclusion when it started like this?" But then you have to have reached a certain age.

If you have cognitive challenges it can be unclear if you jump around too much.

Mikael Hellman

Of course you can talk in an order that is not purely chronological. But you can't jump around too much in a news story.

The difference between what is clear and understandable and what is extremely exciting...



It can be very exciting to see a messy demonstration with lots of police. But that can be too much for someone with cognitive difficulties. It's a matter of balancing between the two.

Highly understandable or unclear for certain people?

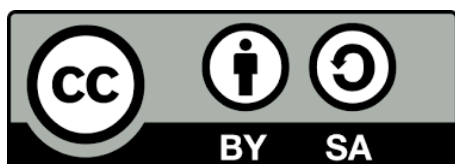
Ester Hedberg

Thank you so much Mikael for sharing your knowledge with us.

This video was prepared by Ester Hedberg from the Swedish National Association for Dyslexia and produced by Ester Hedberg and Rio Hellgren from the Swedish National Association for Dyslexia.

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