



Précis Paper

Film and Education

A discussion of the power of sharing stories through film in education

Discussion Includes

- Filmpond and storytelling
- BenchTV and storytelling
- Current importance of sharing stories via video
- Pre-conditions to producing effective video
- Optimising discoverability of video content
- Video as a tool for education

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1. In this edition of BenchTV, Phillip Lewis (CEO, Filmpond, Sydney) and Alan Conolly (Senior Partner, AR Conolly & Company, Sydney) discuss the importance of storytelling, the power of film in communicating stories, and the effectiveness of storytelling through film as a tool for education.
2. Filmpond is a social media platform that allows people to share stories through film. At the core of the business is the belief that everybody has the right to share a story; after all, storytelling is as old as humanity itself.
3. Today the most powerful medium by which people share stories (apart from face-to-face) is through short film or video. The purpose of Filmpond is to empower people to be able to share stories by creating video in new and more accessible ways.
4. Not only is storytelling fundamental to human nature, it is arguably now more important than it has ever been. As humans, we have a cognitive ability to absorb only so much information. Since the advent of the internet, we have been living in an age in which we are bombarded with information, to the point where we have become desensitised. People are increasingly consuming information by less traditional means; they are seeking to absorb information by *feeling or experiencing* something.
5. The most powerful way for information to be experienced by humans is by way of storytelling – and because we are as humans such visual learners, sharing stories by way of video these days has become one of the most effective ways for information to be absorbed.
6. BenchTV is similarly a platform for storytelling, mainly by lawyers in discussion. Lawyers tell their 'story' - often a case in which they were deeply involved themselves. So they are not only able to discuss issues with special, deep understanding, they are able also to appreciate the more human elements of these legal cases that so often get overlooked in a courtroom or judgment, and even legal education. BenchTV is in essence creating a library of lawyers' stories, which happen to most usually be cases.
7. When a story is shared via video, its effectiveness can be usefully measured. Viewer engagement is central to the success of storytelling, and there is a negative correlation between production value in video, and authenticity.

8. According to CEO of Filmpond Phillip Lewis, there are five preconditions that must be met before an individual can authentically share their story via today's most effective medium (short film):
 - Time
 - Confidence
 - Technical ability
 - Creative ability
 - Interest
9. Filmpond's quest is to provide a technology platform that allows ordinary people like teachers in the NSW Department of Education (who are not filmmakers), for example, to be able to share their stories. The NSW Department of Education currently has 1000 teachers sharing stories across 600 topic areas.
10. A vast number stories are shared by video every day. But when we are able to find a way to unleash those stories, and provide an opportunity for them to find their audience, then we are creating a peer-to-peer framework of conversations, which is probably the holy grail of corporate reconstruction.
11. The Filmpond platform is designed to remove those preconditions of time, confidence, technical ability, creative ability, and interest so that the individual is just left to deal with the story, authenticity, and audience delivery. So Filmpond essentially strips away all the technical elements of producing a video to make it accessible to the ordinary person. This has applications that extend to beyond just that of education – for example, its application to the corporate sector is starting to be explored.
12. Storytelling is about the real totality of what an organisation is doing – it needs to be democratised, and broad, and wide. There are three technologies that Filmpond has developed to enable exactly this:
 - Democratisation of creating film: Filmpond does this by connecting people in the community with people graduates from Australian film school
 - Curation of metadata: in light of the sheer volume of videos online these days, it is the quality of the metadata of those videos that allows them to be discovered by their relevant audience. Curation of metadata is probably the largest part of Filmpond's technology platform.
 - Integration of both the creation and distribution of a story, so that there is no distinction between the creation of a story (the making of video) and the sharing of that story.

These three are the preconditions to allowing video to be the means by which stories are shared and unleashed.

13. Today the trick to getting a story out to its relevant audience is by making its content discoverable. Filmpond's job is to develop the metadata that allows people not only to search and discover, but to also find out how people are interrogating the content in order to provide information back to the people using the platform.
14. With regard to legal storytelling, there is no law made that is not interesting.
15. Benchmark has been publishing bulletins five days a week for eight years now.
16. The video content produced for BenchTV has proved not only useful for lawyers, but also very powerful for clients and the wider community. Better decision-making can occur on the part of a client who is empowered with relevant information, and highly technical and complex subject matter is capable of being made accessible to the ordinary person (who seeks only a layperson's understanding of the subject matter in question) by way of authentic video.
17. As humans, we have an infinite capacity to remember visually, so stories that are told in authentic video format are highly effective and engaging. This huge propensity for people to be absorbed by stories if they are authentic and engaging should not be underestimated; the effectiveness of the video format in communicating those stories should not be underestimated either. So the medium of video – when deployed appropriately – has proven to be an extremely powerful tool in education, legal or otherwise.

BIOGRAPHY

Phillip Lewis

CEO, Filmpond, Sydney

Phillip Lewis is the founder and CEO of Filmpond. Phillip's career spans 17 years in global investment banking and 13 years pioneering and building the Filmpond technology platform. His experiences include business and software development, disruptive technology platform design, change management, and school and organisational transformation. Phillip lives in Sydney with his wife and three children.

Alan Conolly

Senior Partner, AR Conolly & Company, Sydney

Alan Conolly founded the legal firm AR Conolly & Company in 1968 where he remains a partner in full-time practice. He has chaired companies in diverse industries including oil, IT, dance, agrochemicals and film. He is also a Life Member of the Law Society of New South Wales, and publisher of Benchmark.