

Special Video Lighting Report

How to build your own studio lighting for just cents in the dollar. Also includes our exclusive report on streaming video



Make your videos sell by lighting them professionally for just cents in the dollar!



By Quentin Brown
www.gisystemsgroup.com

Contents

Incredible Professional lighting for under \$200.

Introduction to video. (Page 3)

Step by Step instructions (Page 4)

- Getting all the pieces (Page 5)
- Assembly (Page 8)
- Hard Mounting (Page 11)
- Making it portable (Page 12)
- Summary (Page 15)

Green and Blue Screens (Page 16)

7 Tips for Making a Successful Video Production (Page 17)

Beginner's Guide to PC Video Editing (Page 21)

Streaming Video (Page 23)

Resources (Page 42)

About the author (Page 43)

Introduction to video.

Why video is so important for your business?

- * Watching a video is much easier than reading a block of text.
- * People are already used to television and videos.
- * There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. Unless you are an accomplished copywriter it can be quite difficult to write a compelling sales letter. On the other hand what we are going to show you in this report will help you make professional videos.
- * Many marketers use video for demonstration purposes. If you want to build a computer, wouldn't you like to "watch" a real person actually doing it with all the features being explained in live action. So from the user's point of view it's a great educational medium too.
- * Another very important point is credibility. The Internet is a very complex medium. For example I have written this article to help you understand how to create professional video, but can you see me physically do it with the video. With video I can teach you in real time how to create your own video and use it for your business. This assures you or the user that there is a real person behind this report and this gives it a much greater impact as far as credibility is considered.
- * With more and more people having access to broadband Internet, and purchasing multimedia computers, video iPods and players, they are wanting to use what they have purchased and it is your job to provide it to them.

Thus video is a great way for the user as well as for the marketer to build a relationship with each other on the Internet.

Step by Step instructions

One of the most crucial factors of making high quality professional videos is the lighting we use. In this report I am going to show you how we put together a lighting system that made our videos go from very amateurish to professional looking high quality products that sell like hot cakes.

For weeks we used spot lights from a store like Wal-Mart, and while they were very cheap and did a reasonable job, it meant we sweltered under the heat they produced.

After a lot of research we found a much better system and in this report I am going to show exactly how we did it. Even professional light boxes will set you back some big dollars and are also very hot if you have limited space.

Here is what the finished product looks like.



Note I have made my lights fully portable however you could also just put them straight on a wall. This is in a small unused alcove in our house.

Step One Getting all the pieces.

The first step is to purchase all the different pieces. This is very simple and can be done through a lighting shop, hardware or large chain store. All the pieces are readily available.

A lighting shop is probably the best if you do not have access to an electrician and not confident with wires etc as they will probably make them up for you.



1. Electronic Ballast
2. Philips daylight T8
3. Twin Fluorescents with polished backing.
4. Pliers or wire cutters
5. Philips head screw driver
6. Spare wire hard core
7. Plug and cord. Switch optional

1. Electronic Ballast

When we bought the light fitting it did not come with any ballast. If yours comes with traditional ballast unscrew them. The electronic ballast gets rid of any flicker and gives a constant flow of light. We made 6 lights and you will need a ballast for each fluorescent lights.

2. Philips Natural Cool Daylight

The **Philips cool daylight T8** is the best retail solution.

Hakim Chishti from Advanced Marketing Institute says "compact fluoros last 10,000 hours and are cool as can be. White balance is almost perfect without any need for adjusting filters.

Step One Cont.

Compact fluoros don't generate as much light output compared to tungsten lamp-heads. They produce a soft wash of light as opposed to hot swatches of hard light, because the lights have very short fall-off (range). For this reason, most of the time you will not need shadowboxes when using compact fluoros.

Once we shot digital video with CFs, we fell in love with the soft wrap it gives the models/actors.

I have used compact fluoros for almost two years, and "hot" (tungsten) studio lights for more than 20 years. Having used both, I can't imagine why anyone today starting out would want the old style blazingly hot studio lights. For both still and video digital work, the compact fluoros to me are superior in every way.

You can put together a rig for less than \$200. CF bulbs are around \$25 for 200 watt equivalency. Six bulbs = 1,200 watts. 500 watt equivalency bulbs are now available as well; of those, 4 bulbs = 2,000 watts.

One can easily put together lighting setups for digital video. Bill Myers has reported that he uses a couple of gooseneck lamps for \$6 each from Wal-Mart and gets 3 full spectrum fluoros; that is all the light he needs on most small sets. Amazing, I think.

If you are in a professional situation, Kino-Flo (www.kinoflo.com) is generally considered the pro standard for fluoro lights. They make great low power/low heat fixtures.

In any event, one should at least experiment with CFs for a digital video shoot. If they work for your needs you will be very glad not to have to contend with all the issues of tungsten lighting. Tungsten served its purpose, but I am afraid the days of tungsten lighting are essentially over. All of the major movie studios and network TV

Step One Cont.

stations have moved to fluoros. Now they are very affordable for even the hobby photographer.

3. Twin Fluro with polished backing.

We chose the single double fluoros fitting with a polished steel back plate. I have seen some people also use a double fluoros encased box with polished backing. Both work very well.

4. & 5. Pliers or wire cutters and screw driver.

If your going to put these together yourself like we did a good pair of wire strippers and Philips screw driver is all you need.

6 & 7. Spare wire and plug.

Lighting and electrical shops are great places. We picked up a 5 meter cored with a plu which easily was screwed into the light fitting. Because you have to add a little more for the ballast etc you may also need a bit of extra wire. We did as the wire supplied with the light fitting was just not long enough.

Step 2 Assembly.

Different countries have different laws when it comes to electrical work. Some require you to use an electrician when doing any electrical work and some are a little more lenient. Check with the laws in your part of the world.



If you are putting this together yourself it is really quite easy.

Layout all the pieces on a table or bench as a tidy work space is a safe work space.

First cut off the starter plugs (1) as we do not need them with electronic ballast.

Lay out the card board packing (2) under the light fitting as when we install the ballast the bolt heads will stick out the bottom and scratch the table. (Just a little tip from experience)

Next screw in the terminal (3) for the power and the electronic ballasts (4).

Step 2 Cont.



Slide the first fluorescent tube holder end piece (5) into the grooves at the end of the light fitting.

Now we are ready to do the wiring.

The wiring diagram for your light should be on the back of the electronic ballast packing. Some may come with them on a piece of paper. Remember if your feeling a bit nervous get some one to help you.

The secret here is to just follow the diagram one step at a time.

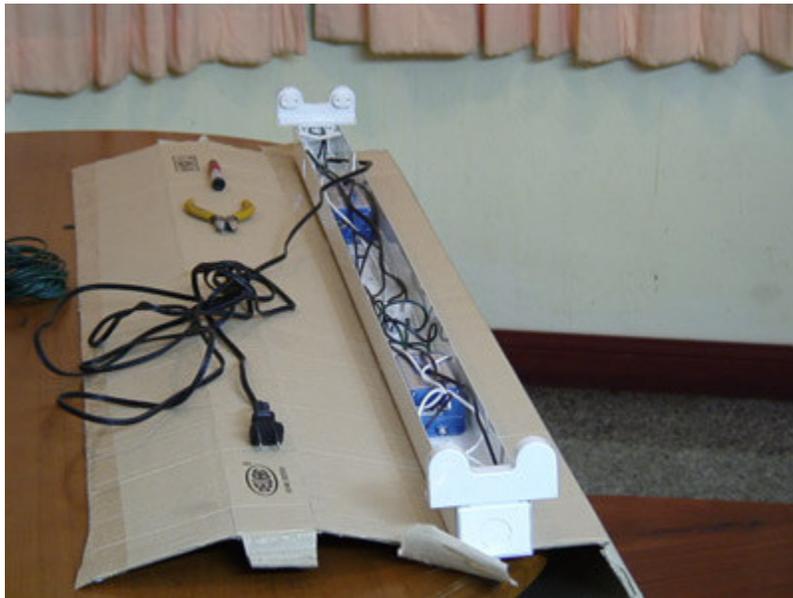
Basically what happens is that two wires go from one end of the light fitting to the ballast and to complete the circuit you need to attach the equal two wires from the other end of the light fitting.

Finally bring in the power cord and connect to the terminal and take wires from the terminal to each of the ballasts.

Check all your connections and make sure there are no bare wires around. Make sure all the wires are seated fully into the connectors.

Step 2 Cont.

Now take the light cord and plug it in to make sure you have light. They may oscillate for a few seconds as the gases in the light settle but after a minute you should have a strong clean flicker free light emanating from the fluorescent tubes.

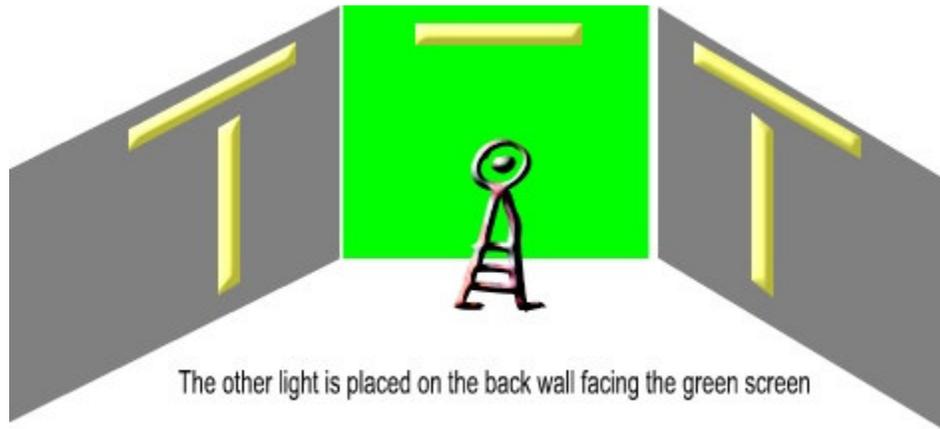


Now screw on the backing plate.



Step 3 – Hard Mounting.

You have two options here. If you are creating a studio in your home you can fix the lights directly to a wall. The room should be normal size and six lights will light it up just perfect.



The lights are placed a few feet from the primary wall here shown in green. Place one vertical and one horizontal. You also place one on the back and then one on the facing wall for different lighting effects.

The one we set up used a board attached to the wall with another board mounted with a hinge so we could rotate the light in different angles but this is just a choice.

The first set we hung we use wire and foam to get the same effect. Just place some foam behind the lights to change the angle.

If you set your camera properly and have good fluorescent lights, one can produce great quality video. Just make sure you are matching your color temperature to the indoor/outdoor 3200-5600 k. To some video people that may sound overly obvious, but I see it overlooked all the time.

Step 4 – Making it Portable

We will look at chroma keying and why you need a green screen later.

We decided in the end to go portable as this gave us the flexibility to move the lights to different locations and of course great for outdoor functions at home like a BBQ.

All you need is some pvc plumbing pipe, some connectors and we used 4 speaker stands which we found very cheap.



In this picture you can see our light is ready for assembly. We used 45ml pvc pipe as this fitted perfectly over the music stand I will show you later. We got a “T” piece and inserted 2 x 45 cm pieces (1). We then bolted this to the back of the fluorescent light case (2).

Step 4 – Cont.

To add more flexibility and allow us to rotate the lights even more we added a curved 90 degree pipe to allow the lights to rotate.



The whole system can be packed down into a small car and transported. We built 6 lights and as you can see in the picture we hung the down light with some wire attached to a lug in the back of the casing.



The Stand

This was probably the hardest part of the whole project. We wanted something very light yet strong and portable.

After looking at professional stands which were very expensive and after pricing them to be made I saw these outside a shop selling speakers.

They are simply speaker stands and after hunting around we bought the 4 of them for \$35 each.

The beauty of these speaker stands is that they extend so you can raise them quite high, the pvc pipe fits over the end perfectly and they are very light.

Step 4 – Cont.

The Total cost was:

Description	US Dollars
Light casings x 6 polished reflect	85
12 T8 Fluros	27
12 Electronic ballasts	100
6 x Wire and Plugs	25
Total	237
Mobility	
PVC Pipe and fittings	35
Stands	140
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>175</i>
Grand Total complete	\$432

Summary

The beauty of this lighting system is you can build a couple of lights and still have a dramatic effect on your production. Video is all about getting the right lighting.

Not only is it great for video but the still shots now have much more clarity.

By adding a green or blue screen to the mix there are virtually no limitations what you can do.

Light like the Movies.

Modern video cameras are made sensitive enough to shoot in any lighting conditions but there are still steps you can take to make your 'cinematography' as attractive as the movies.

Most video cameras are (still) unable to handle the highest contrasts between highlights and lowlights of a picture. For instance, if your 'star' is sitting with his or her back to a bright window you, must take some action to reduce the brightness differences between the outdoor scene framed through the window and the all-important face. The easiest way is by a white reflector – and you can get small collapsible ones from your local photography store. Professional film crews sometimes use sheets of white polystyrene but these can be noisy to hold and are dangerous in high winds!.

The benefit of using a white reflector is that the light coming from it will be the same colour as the rest of the light illuminating the scene. The idea is to just 'fill' the face with a little more soft light to make it more attractive.

Green and Blue Screens

The final step for creative videos is to get a blue or green screen. You can pick up portable ones on ebay for about \$50.

We chose to paint the back wall as a lot of our videos are training or coaching videos.

What's the difference between blue and green screens?

As a reasonably newbie to video production I have found that if you ask too many questions you get heaps of differing answers which can end up very confusing. The simple answer is that these screens are not common to flesh tones so in reality you could use purple or grey if you really wanted to.

Blue was common in the movies as the film was more easily processed for chroma keying, the substitution of the background, than any other color. Green has become popular for video as the digital format seems to prefer the tones in the green.

Either way it is simply used so you can remove the background and substitute another one of your choice.



A couple of years ago you had to do all this by hand which was very time consuming however now there is some software called Ultra 2 which is put out by serious Majic that has simplified the whole process. [http](http://)

Beginner's Guide to PC Video Editing

If you're new to PC video editing then knowing where to start can be a bit daunting, so hopefully this part of the report will point you in the right direction.

To start with you will need a few items of equipment

Camcorders/Video Decks

Depending on your requirements or aims there are number of different solutions to discuss, so i will split these up into separate sections.

2. If you are starting from new then I recommend buying a new digital camcorder, this will give you superior video and sound quality as well as making getting started in video editing very simple, so ideal for the beginner. There are thousands to choose from catering for various types of budgets.

Panasonic GS300 mini dv camcorder \$460

Also DO NOT purchase a camera that does not have an external mic plug. The camera I recommend above is the most affordable/best quality and comes with external mic plug. I would recommend purchasing at www.bhphoto.com (best and highest rated store online for video and audio equipment purchases at great prices) or doing a search on www.pricegrabber.com to comparison shop.

If you had a larger budget I would also recommend:

Cannon GL2 3cc mini dv camcorder instead of the Panasonic - \$2000 (top rated semi pro and priced much lower than other comparable models.

I Personally use a Sony HDV 1080i and the Panasonic 3 chip camera.

2. You may already have an old video deck or camcorder which uses the old analogue outputs such as composite or s-video (be sure to check first what outputs you have).

Beginner's Guide to PC Video Editing

For this kind of setup you would need a capture card/analogue to digital converter, this is discussed in more detail further on in the article.

A PC for Video Editing

It is now possible to easily capture footage from your Digital Camcorder directly to your PC and edit it. If you looking at buying a new PC or building a new one then the current's spec's are more than powerful enough, a typical spec PC these days is a P4, 512Mb Ram, 80Gb HDD, Windows XP or something along those lines. You could always use your existing PC if you have one, but i wouldn't recommend using anything below a PIII 600.

Additional Hardware

When transferring video from your camcorder to your PC there are a number of additional things to consider depending on the type of camcorder your using.

If you're using a digital camcorder then all you need is a firewire card (also known as an IEEE1394 card), a lot of current PC's have these as standard now, otherwise you will need to purchase the card separately. Some of these will come bundled with editing software such as Adobe Premiere but this really depends on which card you buy and how much you spend, once your camcorder is connected to your firewire port windows will automatically recognise your Digital Camcorder.

If your using the old analogue camcorder then you will also need an analogue to digital converter, see the section on video editing cards below.

Speed?

Its worth considering your Pc's Processor speed, the speed will effect the rate your video will encode, encoding is where your DV video clips are converted into a more compressed format, for example DVD's are encoded to MPEG2. So the faster the

Beginner's Guide to PC Video Editing

better really. Also consider the amount of RAM in your PC, 256Mb would be the minimum.

Extra Hard Drive Storage

Its worth considering having an extra dedicated drive for your video footage, remember that five minutes of DV footage uses 1GB of hard drive space so consider a large capacity hard drive such as an 80Gb or 120Gb, also consider the disk drive RPM, at least 7200RPM would be recommended. If your PC supports it (most new ones do now), then a Serial ATA (SATA) drive will offer increased data transfer rates of up to 150MB/sec compared to 100 or 133 offered by the IDE drives, you may also consider a SCSI drive if your PC has a SCSI adapter as standard.

DVD/CD Burners

If your planning on putting your movie onto CD-ROM (VCD), or DVD then a CDRW or DVDRW is an essential piece of hardware, most new pc's may have a CDRW or DVDRW as standard, to burn your DVD, you'll need DVD authoring software.

Video Editing Cards

If you have an older analogue video camera/deck then an analogue USB or PCI capture cards will suffice.

These dedicated analogue to digital converters take process of conversion away from the CPU and therefore speeds up transfer.

It's worth getting a quality capture card as the cheaper cards can produce mixed results.

The Video Editing Software

This is where all your creative work starts, you can capture video from your camera, edit the captured clips, arrange them into a sequence, add transitions, credits and a

soundtrack, titles and when your ready export your movie back to the camera or a suitable encoded file format.

Notes:

7 Tips for Making a Successful Video Production

Producing a video for your business can be an exciting and potentially stressful experience. Be like the movie makers and plan your work. The end result will be better and you will have a lot more fun.

1. Start with Results. The first step is to work out exactly what you want your video to achieve. Is it to train staff on a new procedure, sell a product with an infomercial or is to increase interest at trade shows? Design your video concept around the desired result. Often people get caught up with showing off their business and video skills that the main message gets lost.

2. Write a time line. Once you know what you want to achieve, work out what you want to show and explain in your video. A list of all the shots that you need in your video. These can be much more than just movies off your camcorder. You could add stills and with a bit of panning and zooming in the editing software add variety etc.

Will the bulk of the shots be at your premises and do you need to talk to camera? If you're going to be on the video make sure you dress appropriately and speak clearly.

So a simple time line will look like this:

Scene 1 Introduction credits –

Scene 2 – Video of product –

Scene 3 me speaking –

Scene 4 – Julie using the product –

Scene 5 – Testimonial – Scene 6 close and website.

Note I have broken each separate transition into a scene. I always wondered why they used those clacker boards in movies. If you start doing lots of small takes it is great idea to write each scene and brief description and then just video a few seconds at the beginning of each scene for later retrieval. It will save you hours.

7 Tips for Making a Successful Video Production

3. Know your image. What sort of image do you want to present to your customers? While watching your video, your customers will be left with an impression of what type of business you have and what to expect when doing business with you.

4. Messages. One of the key areas to work out is what communication messages you need to get across. Work out the 4-6 key messages and develop the video around these. If you have too many messages people will tune out. Essentially, make sure you give information that your audience wants to know (not what you think they ought to know).

5. Script. The script provides the backbone to any video project. It's always worthwhile spending extra time refining the script. As a rule of thumb, it needs to be completed before any filming begins. The best kind of script is short and sharp and revolves around your main messages. The quicker you can get your message across, the better the result. Avoid putting everything into the script, as wall to wall voiceover is quite tiring (and boring) to watch.

6. Close the video. A lot of times we see videos trying to sell something or make a point and forget the ending. Always have a call to action or provide the right information. If your selling products then tell them how to buy etc.

7. Get expert advice. Research your medium. There are so many good sites on videoing that there is no reason for not making great ones. Once you have the camera, lights and action you can now create all sorts of products both digital and tangible. Continue learning and finding new techniques.

Streaming Video

This is actually my favourite topic and why I got into video.

Introduction - How to Create Streaming Video

This tutorial covers the different types of video streaming on the internet.

When creating streaming video, there are two things you need to understand: The *video file format* and the *streaming method*.

Here is an excellent tutorial on most of the different techniques you will need to shoot video. <http://www.mediacollege.com/video/>

File Formats

There are many video file formats to choose from when creating video streams. The most common formats are:

1. Windows Media
2. RealMedia
3. Quicktime
4. MPEG (in particular MPEG-4)
5. Macromedia Flash

There are pros and cons for each format but in the end it comes down to personal preference. Be aware that many of your users will have their own preferences and some users will only use a particular format, so if you want to reach the widest possible audience you should create separate files for each format. In reality this isn't usually practical so you need to make a judgment call on which formats to provide. Obviously the better you understand all the options, the better your decision is likely to be.

Streaming Video Cont.

At this stage we won't worry too much about individual formats

Streaming Methods

There are two ways to view media on the internet (such as video, audio, animations, etc): *Downloading* and *streaming*.

Downloading

When you *download* a file the entire file is saved on your computer (usually in a temporary folder), which you then open and view. This has some advantages (such as quicker access to different parts of the file) but has the big disadvantage of having to wait for the whole file to download before any of it can be viewed. If the file is quite small this may not be too much of an inconvenience, but for large files and long presentations it can be very off-putting.

The easiest way to provide downloadable video files is to use a simple hyperlink to the file. A slightly more advanced method is to *embed* the file in a web page using special HTML code.

Delivering video files this way is known as **HTTP streaming** or **HTTP delivery**. *HTTP* means *Hyper Text Transfer Protocol*, and is the same protocol used to deliver web pages. For this reason it is easy to set up and use on almost any website, without requiring additional software or special hosting plans.

Note: This is not technically "true" video streaming — the best it can do is a passable imitation.

Streaming

Streaming media works a bit differently — the end user can start watching the file almost as soon as it begins downloading. In effect, the file is sent to the user in a (more or less) constant stream, and the user watches it as it arrives. The obvious

Streaming Video Cont.

advantage with this method is that no waiting is involved. Streaming media has additional advantages such as being able to broadcast live events (sometimes referred to as a *webcast* or *netcast*).

True streaming video must be delivered from a specialized streaming server.

Progressive Downloading

There is also a hybrid method known as *progressive download*. In this method the video clip is downloaded but begins playing as soon as a portion of the file has been received. This simulates true streaming, but doesn't have all the advantages.

This is the method we as Internet Marketers use most as it does not require special servers etc.

Which Method to Use?

The method you choose will depend on your situation, but most people will opt for HTTP streaming (download or progressive download). This is the easiest and cheapest way to get started. If necessary you can upgrade to a streaming server later.

Still, you will want to understand both options so the next pages of this report will look at each one in a bit more detail. After that we'll talk about how to create the actual video files.

HTTP Streaming Video

This is the simplest and cheapest way to stream video from a website. Small to medium-sized websites are more likely to use this method than the more expensive [streaming servers](#).

Streaming Video Cont.

For this method you don't need any special type of website or host — just a host server which recognises common video file types (most standard hosting accounts do this). You also need to know how to upload files and how to create hyperlinks (see our [website tutorials](#) for more info).

Video obviously uses up a lot of space and you need to have a good host which provides space and bandwidth. We use Hostgator

There are some limitations to bear in mind regarding HTTP streaming:

- HTTP streaming is a good option for websites with modest traffic, i.e. less than about a dozen people viewing at the same time. For heavier traffic a more serious streaming solution should be considered. (*Please note this is simultaneous viewings which is quite a lot*)
- You can't stream live video, since the HTTP method only works with complete files stored on the server.
- You can't automatically detect the end user's connection speed using HTTP. If you want to create different versions for different speeds, you need to create a separate file for each speed. (Video does not work on dialup so don't even try. Video is strictly for broadband users.)
- HTTP streaming is not as efficient as other methods and will incur a heavier server load.

These things won't bother most website producers — it's normally only when you get into heavy traffic that you should be worried about them.

Streaming Video Cont.

To Create HTTP Streaming Video

1. Create a video file in a common streaming media format
2. Upload the file to your web server
3. Make a simple hyperlink to the video file, or use special HTML tags to embed the video in a web page.

That's essentially all there is to it. When a user clicks the hyperlink, their media player opens and begins streaming the video file. If the file is embedded, it plays right there on the page.

New Kids on the Block

Unless you are staying in an underground cave for more than a year without an internet connection, there's a healthy chance that you have at least watched, if not downloaded, an online video on Youtube or Google Videos.

The online video sharing space has exploded in the recent months with the entry of new players like Metacafe, Blip.tv, Revver, Yahoo Videos and so on. Millions of video clips, technology shows, music albums, movie trailers are available on these video sites for online viewing or they can also be downloaded to your hard drive for offline viewing.

This is great for your business as you can now use them to promote products, services and anything you want. All you need is a camera, a bit of software and an Internet connection.

Digital and Analog Camcorders

If you already have a digital camcorder (one that captures in Digital8, MiniDV, HDV, or any of the DVD formats), then you're ready to start shooting your masterpiece.

Streaming Video Cont.

Your camcorder will need some kind of direct connection to your computer, either to the USB or FireWire ports or by inserting the DVD you've recorded. Once you've downloaded the video from the camera, you can upload it to YouTube or bring it into an editing program to play with it some more.

If you have an analog camcorder (one that uses VHS, VHS-C, SVHS-C, 8mm, or Hi8 tape), you can still get your videos onto YouTube. It will require an extra step and some additional equipment, though, since these camcorders are not usually equipped with computer connections. You will need to digitize the video with a converter box, which will convert the analog signal from the camcorder to a digital signal that the computer can understand. After the video has been digitized, you can manipulate it further or upload it.

Editing and Improving Your Videos

If you want to be a bit more hands-on with your video, most new computers come with basic video-editing software installed (like Apple's iMovie or Windows MovieMaker). Once you have copied the video from your phone, camera, or camcorder to your computer, you can bring the video into these programs. Most allow you to not only edit the video, but add effects, titles, and music to make your video look and sound more interesting. I personally use [Sony Vegas Movie Studio](#)

Uploading Your Videos to YouTube, Google Video etc

Most of these services use the same system. Once you're happy with your final result, you'll need to save the video in a format that they can accept in order to upload. Unless you're a professional video producer, we recommend that you save your videos as either QuickTime .MOV, Windows .AVI, or .MPG files — these are the most common formats and they work well within most systems. Check with them in the help area to see which they prefer. I specifically recommend the MPEG2 or 4 (Divx, Xvid) format at 320x240 resolution with MP3 audio. Resizing your video to these specifications before uploading will help your clips look better on these sites.

Streaming Video Cont.

Making Your Video Easy to Find

When you upload your video, they will require you to choose at least one category and enter at least one tag to describe the content in your video. Adding this information helps other members find your video, so if you want an audience, help them out! The more accurate the tags are on each video, the easier it is for everyone to find cool videos to watch.

Make your tags as descriptive as you can—if you took a video of your friends at the beach, you might want to tag it like this: *party beach surfing*. Each tag is separated from the others by a space.

Ten video sharing services compared

The number of video-sharing sites has shot through the roof recently, as dozens of companies try to become the [Flickr](#) of the online video world. To this end, many video services have started offering new features like editing and remixability in an attempt to snatch a piece of the ever-expanding online video pie. But for the average user--who just wants to post a video on the 'net and share it with some friends--there are already too many options out there. All one really wants to know is, which site is going to work, with the least amount of hassle?

I took 10 of these sites out for a test drive, and picked some winners. If you want to post, watch, share, or edit video online, this post's for you.

To test each service, I uploaded a piece of video (a 15MB 320x240 resolution with MP3 audio) to each site and compared video quality, site interface, community features, and functionality. Where applicable I also tried to embed the resulting video in a [Wordpress](#) page. Many of these sites are still in beta, and their functionality could change in the coming months, but if you're looking to post and share video today, this is the current state of things.

Streaming Video Cont.

Eyepot



Appeal: Easy-to-use video uploading and remixing.

Interface: Bright and colorful. Tagging, forums, groups. Not a lot of community features.

Editing: Trim beginning and end, reorder clips on a timeline, add music and photos.

Sharing: Post to a group, invite a friend to the service (but not directly to your clip).

Verdict: Uploading straightforward and painless. **But:** 25MB filesize limit too small. Mashup features fall short of Grouper's "groovies," and it's not even in the same ballpark as Jumpcut when it comes to mixing and editing. Not a lot of reason to use Eyepot, in its current incarnation.

Google Video



Appeal: It's Google.

Interface: Typically clean and sparse Google layout. Uploading requires you download the Google Video Uploader. Allows you to add plenty of metadata, including a transcript. You can monetize your content by assigning a sale price to each clip (you can also give users a "day pass," giving them access to the content for a limited time, but not ownership).

Editing: None.

Sharing: See below.

Verdict: Google Video requires a "video verification" process, where your submission is reviewed to ensure it conforms to Google's technical standards and legal policies. This process "may take several days," so check back for an update.

Streaming Video Cont.

Grouper



Appeal: YouTube with a file-sharing application built on top.

Interface: For full functionality, requires an application download. Windows Media Player-based (converts other formats). Ratings, tagging, groups, RSS feeds.

Editing: Create mashups of your videos and photos, set to music ("groovies").

Sharing: Post direct to myspace, friendster, eBay. Download to hard drive, iPod.

Verdict: "Groovies" are easy to create and could be very popular. **But:** File-sharing application seems half-baked (and is undifferentiated from existing options). "Groovies" will prove much more popular if they can be built online without having to download the app. E-mail registration system was a pain; had to do it twice to get confirmed. After several hours, my file was still unavailable, as the service was still "upload processing."

Jumpcut



Appeal: Create, edit, and remix video online.

Interface: Slick interface feels more like an application than a web page. Scales all videos to a larger size than other sites, but videos don't autoplay and there is no indication of what portion of the video has already been downloaded.

Editing: Bar-none the best editing options of the bunch. Splice your footage, reorder the shots, add music, photos, transitions, even effects--think iMovie in an online interface. Very, very slick.

Sharing: Email to a friend, embed in a web page (worked flawlessly in Wordpress).

Streaming Video Cont.

Verdict: Playing with Jumpcut's features, you immediately understand that the future of online video is here. No current competitor can touch it. **But:** Get too effects crazy and your video slows down. Jumpcut doesn't re-render your files with every remix--which leaves the original video quality intact--but playback of edited files is not perfectly smooth. Don't throw out iMovie just yet.

Ourmedia



Appeal: "The Global Home for Grassroots Media."

Interface: Slow, confusing, and messy. Requires an Internet Archive account, and the integration of the two services is convoluted. Keeps your content in its native format, which is both good and bad--it doesn't recompress your video, but it requires its users to have several different players installed correctly. Creative Commons licenses built-in.

Editing: None.

Sharing: RSS feeds, email to a friend, direct link to files from your own site.

Verdict: Going forward, a good place to upload your media if it is socially-conscious or activist by nature. Also works as an online repository for video/audio storage. **But:** One of the most difficult sites to upload video to. Current "alpha" version falls far short of potential--wait for the next version.

Revver



Appeal: YouTube with monetization--if people watch your video (and the embedded ad), you get paid 20% of what the advertiser pays Revver. If they click on the

Streaming Video Cont.

Revver link at the end, you split the proceeds 50/50.

Interface: Quicktime-based. Requires you to download a client for uploading content. Tagging, emailing, rating, playlisting.

Editing: None.

Sharing: See below.

Verdict: Offers a unique revenue-sharing model that may appeal to content owners and producers. **But:** Uploading process is convoluted (the promised drag-and-drop functionality was nowhere to be found). After trying to upload my file using the Revver client twice, my video was still listed as "unavailable." I later received an email from Revver stating that my submission may contain unauthorized material that requires clearances--which is true. Because Revver and Google Video are the only sites in this roundup that let you monetize your content, we'll be back with an update comparing the two.

Videoegg



Appeal: Lets you painlessly upload video of any format to the web and post it to other sites or share it with friends.

Interface: Requires you download an application in order to upload. The download seamlessly embeds in your browser to give you drag-and-drop functionality.

Editing: Basic trimming of beginning and end points.

Sharing: Post direct to eBay, Blogger, and Typepad. Creates a simple URL, lets you email the video, and gives you javascript and html code for embedding in your own

Streaming Video Cont.

pages.

Verdict: Painless experience. If you only need to post and share video with friends, Videoegg just works. Flash 8 video quality is pretty decent. **But:** Video didn't embed properly in other pages (Wordpress).

Vimeo



Appeal: Flickr for video.

Interface: Nice and clean, uses a flash wrapper to play native formats. No download required, simple and easy uploads. Tagging, commenting, voting. Nice player with a volume control and no burned-in logo.

Editing: None in the current version.

Sharing: Post to Flickr, send to del.icio.us, download original file, embed in your MySpace profile or blog, create an RSS feed.

Verdict: Good video quality. Embedding the video in Wordpress worked flawlessly. **But:** Light on community features, and weekly storage cap of 20 megs is too limiting.

vSocial



Appeal: "The fastest, easiest way to upload, watch and share your favorite video clips."

Interface: All Web 2.0'd-out. Big fonts, AJAX, tagging, rating, reviewing, RSS feeds, creative commons licenses.

Editing: Offers "edit this video" functionality, which I couldn't test (see below). Can

Streaming Video Cont.

also create "Video Rolls," which are customized playlists generated from your elected criteria.

Sharing: Embed in your own page, MySpace, Typepad, Blogger, del.icio.us, Flickr, Blog It! (write a post on your own blog about a video without leaving vSocial).

Verdict: Lots of community features. **But:** Didn't live up to their "fastest" or "easiest" claim--I never successfully got a video uploaded (tried three times). Quality of existing clips is less than stellar--everything's resized to 320X240. Your mileage may vary, but even with a Quicktime file that uploaded to other sites without a problem, I never got vSocial to work.

YouTube



Appeal: The video-sharing site everyone's already heard of. Mindshare-winner by a mile.

Interface: Tabbed pages feature ratings, favorites, flagging, tagging, and commenting. Create playlists, subscribe to other's uploads, subscribe to tags. The player only features a mute button (rather than level control), and full-screening the video opens a new window and starts playback over.

Editing: None.

Sharing: Embed in other websites, including Friendster, eBay, Blogger, MySpace.

Verdict: Easy to use, no major issues. Decent video quality, audio sounds compressed. Video embedded in Wordpress fine (but was off-center). **But:** No progress bar for uploading. Fairly lengthy "processing" delay before you (or anyone else) can watch your video.

Streaming Video Cont.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

For posting: If you just want to get a video clip online and share it with friends via email or on your own blog, [Vimeo](#) wins for its speed, ease-of-use, and simple playback functions. It also lets users download the original file, and features some light community features (note that a new version is launching very soon). One of the few sites I used that I never had a problem with. Alternate choice: [Videoegg](#).

For viewership: If you want to step up to more community features and get widespread viewership of your viral clip, [YouTube](#) gets the job done with a lot less hassle than [vSocial](#) or [Grouper](#).

For editing: If you want to alter your video online in any way--through editing, remixing, or combining your clips with those from other users--then head on over to [Jumpcut](#) and don't look back. Jumpcut really offers the first leap forward in online video sharing, and is worth a look even if you have no use for editing features (its full-fledged community is launching "very soon"). Alternate choice: none, yet, although [Motionbox](#) looks to be a potential competitor.

For this roundup, I left out more services than I reviewed. This is because many of them are mere YouTube clones, at least in their current state (e.g., [CastPost](#), [ClipShack](#), [Dailymotion](#)). Others, like [Dabble](#) and the aforementioned [Motionbox](#), are not yet publicly available. You're welcome to check out a list of 40 video sharing sites at [eConsultant](#), all of which I at least glanced at. [TechCrunch](#) also has some great coverage of the developing online video scene.

For a larger list visit http://www.lightreading.com/document.asp?doc_id=112147

Streaming Video Cont.

Now if you want to add video to your site and not use these public video sites then we have some software that will you can purchase that will allow you to add video directly to your site.

Instantly Add Streaming Video To Your Website and make your site stand out from the crowd for Under \$50!

Lots of people want to add video to their websites but not many people are able to find a viable cost effective solution until now.....



The MSI Web Video Package is a set of tools to help you put quality video on your web site or in your presentations for under \$50. [Visit the website.](#)

Streaming Video has always been available to the large corporate sites and techies. Now you can use the MSI Web Video Package software to produce **your own streaming video** just like the professionals with no knowledge of programming required.

We will also provide you with all the tutorials and tools to make it as simple as possible for you. Just watch the videos on this page to see what you can do.

Streaming Video Cont.

What is included in the Package?

MSI Web Video Package includes our proprietary software product and a group of free software packages and tutorials that will allow you to create or import various video formats and then compile them into a Macromedia FLV file. This is the best quality file format available today and is playable with no special plugings on over 90% of computers.

MP3 Web Video Software

Our special software takes all the hard work out of linking your video to a player. If you have looked on the web for a player you will see they go from \$25 upward and are very chunky. Then you have to work out how to link them with your video. Our player is a small 3 kb file which makes it one of the smallest on the web. AS you can see in the diagram to the left there are also a lot of added features for this powerful little player.

Lets have a look at them quickly.



Streaming Video Cont.

- **3 Player sizes** - There are three different player sizes you can choose from. 320x240 - 240x180 - 160x120. One will be a perfect match for your site.
- **Playing Options** - You can use the check boxes to activate Auto Play, Looping, and by using our custom affiliate link earn some revenue when you use your player.
- **Custom Color** - This feature allows you to take the colored line on our players and change it to suit your site.
- **Server Storage** - This feature allows you to store the videos in another folder or even another server. Make sure you add the / to the end of the path.
- **Output Folder** - This section has to be filled in to compile the files and means you can organize all your files for each project in one place.
- **Instant Back room help link** - This will get you into the help files and tutorials on our private room.
- **Resize to suit your page** – while we have 3 set players you can adjust the size in the code easily to make your video any size you want.

Plus Free Software - This package is designed to help you get the most out of your video and so we have included a recorder that will allow you to download from your supported video camera or use your web cam to make you videos.

There is also an editor so you can manipulate your videos and add effects etc. Many people have avi or mpeg files so we also include a converter to make the files into flv files for you. Some great sites so you can download and play with some free movies straight away. We also provide tutorials on how to embed your video into your web

Streaming Video Cont.

pages.

We place all this information in a private room just for you that we will add to as we find new resources. The whole package is based around helping the novice to add streaming video to their web site. However the accomplished video streamer will also appreciate the ease of compiling and delivering streaming video using our software.

Questions and Answers

Why flv and not swf? - Swf files need to be compiled each time and have limitations on quality and also length. You can simply edit your flv file any time and reload to see the changes instantly.

Can I use the players in other Software? - NO. These players are the property of MSI Web Video and probably wont work anyway.

How hard is adding video? - With the interactive videos and software we provide most people should be able to have a video done and uploaded to their website within the hour. Much quicker once you have done it the first time.

What Hardware will I need? - Unless you are wanting to develop your own videos then no extra hardware is required than a standard multimedia computer and a little experience building web pages.

Summary of what you will get.

- 1.** You will get the **MSI Web Video software** to attach your video to a player and all the options.
- 2.** A **complete set of tutorials** and software to help you encode and output a clean time sensitive FLV file

Streaming Video Cont.

3. Free editing and recording software. These are all freely available on the Internet however we have sourced them for you.

4. A list of sites where you can download video files so you can start playing immediately and learning the power of video.

The cost of MSI Web Video is only \$45.00 USD.

This is probably one of the cheapest and easiest to use video software packages on the market today. It gives you the versatility to turn your PC or Laptop into a fully functional video studio for just cents on the dollar.

MSI Web Video

No-Risk Purchase Form

YES Quentin, this is exactly what I've been waiting for!

I'm eager to build my own Streaming Videos.



2Checkout.com, Inc. is an authorized retailer of goods and services provided by MSIncome.com (Qld, Australia).



Paypal users can check their payment at Paypal.com

Only \$45.00

Secure Order Form

MSI Web Video is a product of MSIncome.com

Resources

Below is a list of resources for various video and streaming products. Once you get into video you will find it exciting and very rewarding.

Editing Conversion Products

Sony Vegas: <http://www.sonymediasoftware.com/products/vegasfamily.asp>

Adobe Premier: <http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere/>

Ultra 2: <http://www.seriousmagic.com/products/ultra/> Chroma Keying Made Easy

Stock Footage and Training

Digital Juice: <http://www.digitaljuice.com/>

Digital Juice training: http://www.digitaljuice.com/djtv/default.asp?show=all_videos

This site is fantastic. I learnt more in these tutorials than I learnt at college.

Websites for Cameras

PC World: <http://www.pcworld.idg.com.au/index.php/id;1847886895>

Media College: <http://www.mediacollege.com/video/camera/>

Choosing a camera: <http://www.shortcourses.com/choosing/contents.htm>

[Other Reports on Video](#)

About the Author



Quentin Brown

Quentin Brown has been involved With Internet Marketing for the past 9 years. He runs over 150 websites and speaks at numerous conferences and training seminars.

He has navigated his way through the maze of information and is a hands on marketer being mainly self taught.

<http://www.quentinbrown.com>

This report is one of many that he produces to help other marketers succeed online. Some of his other sites are:

Mp3 Sound Stream – <http://www.mp3soundstream.com>

Hi Fi Audio Stream – <http://www.hifiaudiostream.com>

MSI Juke Box – <http://www.msijukebox.com>

MSI Web Video – <http://www.msivideo.com>

Personal Teleprompter – <http://www.msiprompt.com>

Wordpress Training Videos – <http://www.wordpressvideo.com>

Internet Business – <http://www.gisystemsgroup.com>

Internet Business Training – <http://www.mywebsitemanual.com>

Special Offers – <http://www.msispecialoffer.com>

Rss Fetch Software – <http://www.msifetch.com>

Free Bonus Report

Making Your Own Backdrops, Bluescreens and Greenscreens

This Tech Help Guide will explain how to design and assemble blue and greenscreens and backdrops for photos and video, as well as how to easily and inexpensively build a portable frame to support these backdrops out of PVC pipe or metal conduit.

(NOTE: Please be sure to read some of the extra notes at the bottom of this guide for optimal performance).



For amateur or hobbyist photographers and video producers, coming up with the money for a nice, \$200 (and up!) backdrop and the expensive stands and hangers required to help support it isn't very easy. Rather, they need a way to make a nice-looking background that is both good looking and easy to transport.

In this guide, I will show you how you can make a great portable backdrop frame that allows you to transport your backdrops and hang them at any height and width you would like—all for *under \$50*, using parts from your local fabric and hardware stores. Getting a good chromakey, depends on more than only the background, and requires other equipment and computer software. We will cover this in another report.

Buying Parts for the Frame and Support

First of all, you need to decide what materials you will need for a stand or hanger for your backdrop. If you plan on using it outdoors, you will need to use a very strong material (like metal) that won't blow over easily. If you only need an indoor solution, you can use cheaper and more portable PVC piping. There are different grades of PVC conduit (the most popular are 'Schedule 40' and 'Schedule 80') and metal pipe. In my example, I use schedule 40 PVC conduit because it costs less and is very lightweight (for portability).

You can purchase all the required parts for a stand or hanger at Lowe's, Home Depot, Handyman hardware, or some other local home-supply store. Look in the plumbing or electrical supply aisles to see the selection of different pipes and conduit. Following is a list of all the parts I used in my sample frame.

Items needed for the frame (with prices from Lowe's as of 5/28/2005):

- 3/4"x10' Sch. 40 PVC **Pipe** (\$1.69 each section) - 4 (at least)
- 1 1/4"x10' Sch. 40 PVC **Pipe** (\$3.59 each section) - 1 (or more, for more background fabrics)
- 3/4" Sch. 40 PVC **Elbow** (\$0.18 each) - 2
- 3/4" Sch. 40 PVC **T-Connector** (\$0.27 each) - 2
- 3/4" Sch. 40 PVC **Cap** (\$0.27 each) - 8
- 3/4" Sch. 40 PVC **Coupling** (\$0.14 each) - 2 (at least)
- 3/4" Sch. 40 PVC **Cross Connector** (\$1.17 each) - 2

TOTAL COST: \$16.03

Tools You May Need:

You will need either a hacksaw or a PVC pipe cutter to cut the PVC pipe (illustrations below), scissors to cut fabric and/or other things and tape, velcro or another adhesive to cut and secure the fabric to the frame.



PVC Pipe Cutter



Hacksaw

Fabric Options for Backgrounds/Backdrops and Chromakeying

In researching on the Internet, I have found many different opinions as to which fabric is the best to use for backdrops, which fabrics are best for greenscreening and bluescreening, and what fabrics last longer with or without paint, etc.

In my experience, it is easiest to go to a fabric store (or a store with fabrics in it, such as Wal-Mart) with some ideas in mind, and look through all the different fabrics to find something that suits your purposes. If you want a plain and simple background, there are many solid color backgrounds; if you want something more radical, you could get one of the many cartoon character backgrounds, a 'clouds' background, etc. Prices for different fabrics vary widely (especially depending upon the width of the fabric), and I usually like narrower (around 48") fabric, because it's easier to manage (and it fits in my car for portability better!).

But I will offer my advice on a few specific types of backgrounds and what fabric/thickness works best for them. Also, when selecting a fabric, you must keep in mind how the lights you use (whether they be \$30 halogen worklights or \$500 soft

boxes) reflect off the fabric. If you need to, ask for a sample of the fabric (these are usually free) and take some pictures of it under different lighting conditions.

See my guide for lighting for photography and video (not yet posted) and lighting for green/blue screen compositing or chromakeying (not yet posted)

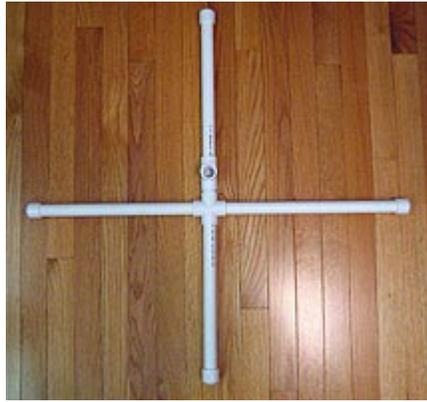
Fabric types/backgrounds:

- **Muslin** is a strong, sturdy fabric for painting on, or as a simple white or tan-colored backdrop. You can use acrylic or oil paints (found at art supply stores) or paints you can find at home-supply stores to make professional-looking backdrops for portraits and the like. The only problem with muslin is that it is prone to wrinkling (but this may not matter if you paint it. Be sure to wash the muslin right after you buy it and iron it to get out as many of the wrinkles you can. Make sure you buy PVC or metal piping that is sturdy enough to hold some of the thicker muslins. Do a Google search for 'paint muslin backdrop' to find out more.
- **Cotton**, one of the more common fabrics found in a fabric store, is fairly easy to keep clean, but not so easy to paint on. Cotton is best for solid dyed colors. Make sure you wash and iron the backdrop before rolling it, or the wrinkles may be very hard to remove!
- **Rayon** is a very lightweight fabric that can be had for a low price and is easy to transport, roll, and keep wrinkle-free. However, because it is so thin, you have to be careful when lighting it (sometimes lights behind the screen will make the lighting very uneven).
- **Polyester** is a very low maintenance fabric, and is relatively easy to keep wrinkle-free. Simply make sure you've washed and dried it, then take it out as soon as you can to avoid wrinkles. Light reflects off polyester a little brighter than most cottons, so make sure you account for that when lighting backdrops. You can purchase polyester in many different thicknesses (and many different prices); make sure your backdrop support frame is sturdy enough to hold it.
- **For Compositing**: Professionals usually have access to professional-quality blue and green paints and fabrics for building high-quality backdrops. However, the average photographer or videographer does not have so much money. In my experience, the 'greenest green' or 'bluest blue' you can find will work fairly well (especially for photographs which you'd like to [edit in Photoshop](#)).

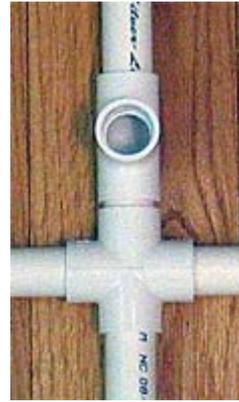
Once you get your fabric, follow the steps below to make your backdrop support frame and attach your fabric to it.

Step-By-Step Instructions

First, we'll make the supporting base for the backdrop stand:



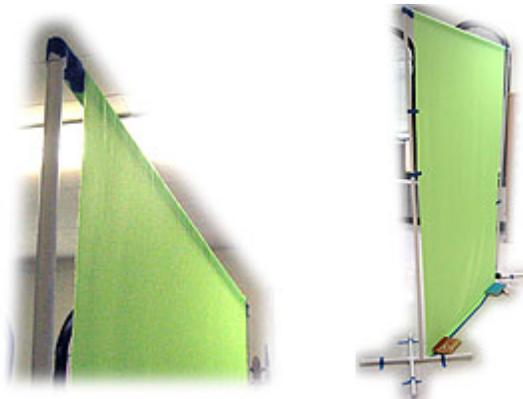
Supporting Base



Detail of Middle

1. Cut eight pieces (using a PVC cutting tool or a hacksaw—see illustrations above) of 3/4" **pipe** about 1 1/2' in length, and put a **cap** on one end of each.
2. Now, cut two pieces of 3/4" **pipe** about 2" in length, and firmly stick them into one hole on each of the **cross connectors** (they look like a + sign). **Caution:** Always make sure you securely tighten each joint every time you use or move the stand*.
3. Stick the **T-connectors** on the 2" pieces of **pipe**, and stick one of your 1 1/2' cut **pipe** sections into the other end of the **T-connector** (the top of the T will be for the actual frame).
4. Stick your other 1 1/2' **pipe** sections into the other open holes on the **cross connectors**, so you have two large "+ 's," with a **T-connector** on the same side of each.

Next, we'll work on the rest of the PVC pipe frame:



1. Cut two of the other 3/4" **pipe** pieces to whatever size you'd like (these will determine the height of your backdrop stand). Make sure the height is low

enough to not hit the ceiling if you'll be using the stand indoors, but high enough so the backdrop will cover the whole frame of your pictures/video.

2. The length of your 'crossbar' (the top piece of PVC **pipe**) depends on how wide the fabric you have is. Since I had 48" fabric, I cut my 3/4" crossbar **pipe** about 6" wider than my fabric (54" total). **REMEMBER**: when you push the **pipe** together, you lose about 3/4" at each connection.
3. Now, take the two side support **pipes** and stick a 90° **elbow** on one end of each one, then stick the crossbar **pipe** into the two **elbows**.
4. Finally, stick the two side support **pipes** into the tops of the **T-connectors** on your base, and see how your backdrop stand looks. (But we're not finished yet!).
5. If you want, you can simply use this frame and clamp on your backdrop with clamps that can be found at any local hardware store. Otherwise, read on for an easy, wrinkle-free way to store, transport and hang different backdrops.

Finally, we can install the fabric you purchased onto the backdrop support:

1. Make sure the fabric is as wrinkle-free as possible; depending on the fabric, you can do different things to remove wrinkles, such as putting the fabric in a dryer or ironing it (follow the directions for the specific type of fabric you have, or you could burn your fabric!).
2. Secure one end of the fabric to the 1 1/4"-diameter PVC pipe (the one slightly larger than the typical frame PVC pipes using duct tape or another suitable adhesive. Alternatively, if you have circular fabric clips that fit your pipe and hold the fabric on, you may use them.
3. Now, roll the fabric onto the pipe on a flat surface, making sure to keep the fabric smooth as you roll it onto the pipe.
4. Wrap Velcro strips, rubber bands, or a piece or two of tape around the rolled-up fabric. You should now have a PVC pipe with the fabric rolled tightly and securely on it.
5. Take off the crossbar pipe from the frame, then take the 1 1/4" pipe and slide it onto the crossbar.
6. Reassemble the frame with the crossbar and fabric pipe on it, then roll down the fabric to your desired height. To make sure the fabric doesn't roll right off the pipe, slowly let it down while holding onto the pipe, and tape the larger pipe to the crossbar (I use Blue painter's tape) before it is all the way unravelled. |
7. That's it! You're finished!

Tips for Adjusting/Modifying/Transporting Your Backdrop Support Frame

- If you would like to raise your backdrop's height a little without cutting new pieces of PVC for the sides, you can use one coupler on each side support and add another piece of PVC (making sure both sides are raised an equal amount). **Caution:** You can't raise it too much (usually more than 2'), or the whole thing might become unstable and fall down.
- You can put different fabrics on your frame by simply slipping on different PVC pipes with the other fabrics attached. If you have fabrics of different widths (48" is not *always* ideal), you can make another crossbar that is long enough to hold any width of fabric (just make sure you don't compromise the sturdiness of your frame; if it's too weak, it could fall over).
- It is easy to transport this frame; simply disconnect all the PVC pieces and go! I usually leave the bases put together, and leave the two 90° elbow pieces on the crossbar (to hold the backdrop-holding pipe on during transport). You can carry all these parts with one arm; just be careful to not hit things with them!

Extra Notes

This portable PVC setup is only a small beginner's method for simple chroma keying. There is a reason professionals will buy portable chromakey setups worth well over \$10,000. This setup is meant to help film enthusiasts and home users who might want to do a small special effect or two to do that.

There are many other ways to do chroma keys - for a larger background, or for full-body keying, buy some seamless chromakey blue or green paper from a company such as [Adorama](#) or [B&H](#) and hang it from the ceiling or a wall (or on your PVC frame). You can also paint a wall or floor using special chroma key paint.

Another note: This guide is meant to help teach you how to build the backdrop support stand - if you want to learn lighting for chromakeying (and what equipment you'll need), [search Google](#).