



So What Is a Flip Video?

The Flip Video camera has become a very popular source for personal video communication. The Flip Video camera is designed to be a simple means of capturing video and easily sharing it with others. Being so simple to operate has its tradeoffs. But with the right attitude and a little care, you can get very good results. Here are a few tips to get the most out of your Flip.

Operation: The camera has minimal controls: on/off, record, zoom, and playback. The Flip comes installed with software for sharing and editing your video through a built-in USB connector. The software allows you to export videos for email, the web, and to post them directly YouTube.

Capturing audio (interviews). The microphone is built-in, with no input available for an external mic. That means your subjects must be close--within 10 feet--to be heard, and preferably much closer (3-4 feet) for interviews. The mic will pick up background noise, so try to pick quieter spots for interviews.

Handholding. I have conducted reasonable interviews handholding the Flip, but for long interviews it would be wise to use a small tripod. We include a tripod with our checkout cameras.

Lens. The Flip has a fixed-focus lens capable of focusing from 30" to infinity, and is very sensitive under low-light conditions. The Flip uses digital zoom, which means the image deteriorates when you zoom in. Unless there is a strong reason to use this feature, I would suggest not zooming, and instead get closer to your subject. But if you must, you must. UFOs for example...

Recording time. The Flip holds up to one hour of video, then you must download it to your computer to free up more recording time.

Recording quality. The Flip Video provides surprisingly high quality image, but it is not intended to compete with the optics found on larger video camcorders. The key word here is ease of use, in a very small pocket-size, and inexpensive (~\$150) solution.

Editing. The Flip Video comes with built-in editing software. You can trim clips, assemble them into a sequence, create transitions, and add music. For other than simple editing, I recommend importing the clips into more powerful editing programs, i.e., Adobe Premiere, iMovie. The editing capabilities of the Mac version of the Flip Video editing software are severely limited.

What can it do for Extension? Video offers a great DIY way to create or enhance online learning modules. And the Flip puts that capacity in your hands with minimal technical hassles, know-how, or button-anguish. Use a Flip to conduct interviews, create simple how-tos, or capture club events, then quickly and easily post them to YouTube, or your website.

For more information, visit the Flip Video website: <http://www.theflip.com/index.shtml>

More questions? Don't hesitate to contact me.

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