

University of South Florida

From the Selected Works of Claudia J. Dold

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Using video to promote your library

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Invited Speaker: National Library Day/Nacional Bibleoteekdag at the National Library of Aruba

January 20, 2014. Director: Mrs. Astrid Britten

Thank you for the invitation to your Nacional Bibleoteekdag conference. I am honored to be here among you. And in Aruba – even people from Florida look to Aruba as Heaven! This is my first visit to Aruba and I hope it is one of many visits to your beautiful island. If someone would like to adopt me so I may stay forever, please see me after this talk.

Like you, I am a librarian. You may be wondering why I want to talk to you about video as a new means of communication with your many audiences. Believe me when I tell you that I had no skills when I started to make videos. I have no background in art, in drawing or in photography. When I was seven years old, I was told in school that I had no talent for drawing and I was dismissed forever from art class. I also stutter when I am nervous or tired. In my quiet and artless world, I learned to look and to listen.

I grew up, I got my education and I led my life. In 2007, I finished library school and took a position at the University of South Florida in the Florida Mental Health Institute Research Library, where I trained as a health services librarian under Dr. Ardis Hanson. Perhaps you had a chance to hear her last year when she visited the National Library. My training was demanding but with three of us in the library, we got the work done. Then one of us had a heart attack and did not return to work. Suddenly, Ardis and I had to find a way to create TIME. That is when I began my education in video creation. Our first videos were a substitute for in-class teaching of library and research skills. If students watched the video, we did not have to teach those same skills over and over. That program has been very successful at my library.

Let me paraphrase something the good Professor Einstein said: Success is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. This is no problem for me. I like to work, and the inspiration part is so much fun!

I have been thinking about videos since I arrived on Saturday. I would love to make a video about how beautiful your island is; how much I enjoy hearing your three languages, walking on your beautiful beaches, and feeling the wind on my face. Do you see a problem with this? How does one translate the enjoyment of sound or the touch of a breeze into a package of sound and images?

Let's leave that problem for the moment and start on a logical path.

The first order of business in making a video is determining the message. Video as a medium for communication has the power to convince someone of something. I think I could convince just about anyone that Aruba is a lovely place to visit. But we are librarians, and you are the librarians of Aruba. What do you want to tell me about your country, your library, your culture? If you can tell me, I can show you how to create a video to show to the world.

Back to the logical path. I was talking about communication theory. To begin, I need to determine the message, the audience, and a medium – in this case, I am talking about video, but it could be posters or

any kind of media. Determining the message – what you want to say -- and the audience or audiences is the first step, and it is essential to keep those two items in mind throughout the project.

Next, one writes a script that tells a story so the audience can follow your message. It is recorded by the narrator. In the beginning, a short video of about three minutes is a good target, but shorter can also work very well. Then, images are selected, and these can be units of film, photographs, drawings -- I have even used a puppet. All these pieces are put into the computer software. One pushes the button, and voila – you have something. That something usually needs editing, adjusting, captions, arrows, and a lot of time to make it right. When the video is a finished product, it can be set free for your audiences to see.

So that is the process.

Now, since you are all knowledgeable about your country, your culture, and your heritage, I would like each of you to write down an idea for a video, who the audience or audiences will be, what message you want the audience to hear or what you want to demonstrate, teach, and communicate, in a video. Then give me two ideas for images you would include in your video to make your idea clear or inspiring. Think in color! Think in sounds! Please feel free to write in your preferred language; I will ask someone to translate your notes into English for me. You can see already that I am very much the student among you, the Aruban librarians. Please take five minutes to write something; you may discuss your ideas with your neighbor if you like.

[TIME for writing, collecting the papers. The translator then reads an idea from the audiences' notes– I ask a question or two about the idea; I ask the audience for suggestions about this idea.]

As you can see, you have wonderful ideas to share with your countrymen, with other Papiamentu-speaking groups in the Caribbean, with Dutch-speakers in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Africa; and with the English-speaking world. Remember the process: the audio is added separately from the visual part of the project, so the same script may be read in different languages and fitted to the same visual content. One video may reach audiences in different language groups. One idea can reach the world.

Let me introduce a new thought. One video is wonderful, but can you imagine a series? How about a series of videos that highlights memories of your senior citizens and the lifestyle they remember, tied to the material you have in your national archives? Maybe a video that highlights the different architectural styles on the island and their cultural background? I would love to learn about the historic documents in the national library, so perhaps I could plan an academic trip to your lovely island and conduct research. If I want to do it, I would think that other people will come too, once they know what is here. Video has the power to show as well as to tell. All you need is a good idea and inspiration.

I am looking forward to working with you in the upcoming workshop, to put the tools for making videos into your creative hands.