Using video to enhance your company’s image or inform customers about new products and services is becoming very popular these days. No longer is video something to be viewed as time consuming, requiring expensive equipment or restricted to video professionals. In fact, anyone with an interest in plants and owns a smartphone or tablet can be taking photos, capturing video, recording audio and editing their projects, all on the same device. But video is not just for the company website. Millions of people routinely add video to their Social Networking conversations hosted by Facebook, Twitter or Google+. Imagine a situation where a customer is texting your sales manager or posting a message on the company Facebook page and you are able to respond not only with a text message or a photo but also a video clip you have hosted on YouTube covering common situations encountered each year.

In this article, I will showcase some of the current videos available online from various garden centers, landscape designers and wholesale nurseries which feature a company’s services or educates consumers in the proper way to care for plants. I’ll describe how you can create your own video using still images, background music and a voice-over narration using only an iPhone or iPad. Lastly, I’ll explain how to upload the video to your own video channel on YouTube and link to it from your website.

Learning from others

As with most new things I try to do with a computer, I look up the topic on the Internet and see what is available. In this case, I did a search on YouTube’s website for videos from Ohio green industry companies. I selected six different firms to highlight their use of online video, including: Ciminelli’s Inc. Landscaping and Garden Center, Finlandscape, Wilson’s Garden Center, Cedarbrook Landscaping and Garden Center, Scott’s Garden Center and Art Form Nurseries.

Comparison of Firms

Let’s start by looking at each of the videos presented in the table (page 17), Online Videos by the Ohio Green Industry.

Looking at the most recent video from each firm, we saw one company, Wilson’s Garden Center using a video recording of two people talking to a camera and explaining how to do something. The
other videos were more of a slide-show emphasizing services and work history. One video utilized a narrator to provide voice-over information and four utilized text on the screen to convey company information.

However, given the large number of videos that Art Form Nurseries has produced over the past four years, they also produce videos with a person talking to the camera. One interesting note, Art Form Nurseries produces bi-weekly videos throughout the season which offer updated information on plant availability.

Lastly, if you want to learn about plants, crafts, seasonal ideas and events be sure to check out the excellent library of videos offered by Wilson’s Garden Center at: youtube.com/user/Wilsongardencenter/videos

Creating Your Video on an iPhone or iPad

As seen above, it is pretty common to work with photos, music and even a voice-over narration when putting together a video to explain your company’s products and services. One app that I’ve started to use with students at Ohio State is called SPLICE. Information about the app is available at: spliceapp.com

I’ve used this app with students who don’t own an iPad but do own a smartphone, most owned an Apple iPhone that can take photos and video. They were assigned to complete two video projects using SPLICE on the iPad or iPhone. Many of the students chose to download the app to their personal iPhone and do the whole project on the phone. Isn’t that amazing?!!

Here’s what the SPLICE app description says:

“You capture it, You edit it, You put music to it. You share it with the world. All from your iPhone. The most advanced app of its kind on the market. Splice is an easy-to-use yet highly sophisticated video editing and audio/video effects system. And it works on the iPhone 4 and 3GS running iOS4.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Serving 4 videos on YouTube going back to May 6, 2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciminello’s Inc. Landscaping and Garden Center</td>
<td>Intense video with images, animations and background music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland Landscape</td>
<td>Very nice slideshow with classical music in the background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson’s Garden Center</td>
<td>Shell &amp; Geri show us how to use items around the house to make planters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedarbrook Landscaping and Garden Center</td>
<td>Very nice slideshow with background music, text and animations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott’s Garden Center</td>
<td>Slideshow with background music, animations and voice-over</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Form Nurseries</td>
<td>High quality photos with animations and background music</td>
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<td>serving 5 videos on YouTube back to June 6, 2010</td>
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<td>serving 5 videos on YouTube going back to June 6, 2010</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WesUjpx7rczY">www.youtube.com/watch?v=WesUjpx7rczY</a></td>
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continued from page 17

For me, the features of the app are GREAT and the price couldn’t be better, it’s FREE. So let’s take a look at making your first video.

For my project, I chose the Dr. Steven M. Still Garden at The Ohio State University (Fig 1). Located in front of Howlett Hall.

“The Steven M. Still Garden features an extensive display of multi-seasoned perennials, shrubs, and small trees. On September 7, 2005 world-renowned English garden designer and plants man Adrian Bloom led the one-day installation of the garden with 120 volunteers, creating a colorful and diverse entrance to the Learning Gardens.” Source: Charwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens.

**Word of Caution:** Before we get started, let me say that I have not received any support from the companies described in this example. Undoubtedly, there are other apps and mobile devices capable of producing a similar video product, but I lack the resources and time to check all possibilities. OK, now let’s get started.

**STEP 1: Take Photos** - Depending on the goal of your video, you may need to wait until it is appropriate to take the seasonal photos you want to use. Once Spring has passed, it's kind of hard to take photos of spring flowers. However, other people may have photos or you can sort through photos that you have collected over time. In my case, I used the same iPad last summer to take photos of the Steven Still Garden, so I have that covered. When you take photos or video with an iPhone or iPad, they are stored in the Photos library, called the Camera roll.

**HINT:** If you want to transfer photos from your computer to the iPad, utilize Dropbox. This free cloud service offers online storage for any digital file format, including MS Word, Excel, PDF, photos, video and others. Their free app works very nicely on the iPad/iPhone and easily transfers photos into the iPad photo library.

**STEP 2: Select Audio** - Depending on the goal of your video, you may want classical, progressive, jazz or some other type of music for your background. I found royalty-free music in MP3 format (required) at incompeitech.com/music/royalty-free/ The site is well organized for easy searching of various music Genres and Feels. Search results provide impressive details about the selection, the instruments being played and download options. All you have to do is click on the play/stop buttons and decide whether you want to browse more selections or download what you already found.

**HINT:** Observe the length of the audio file you are considering. To avoid adding additional software to your system, pick an audio file that is in the ballpark of your finished video and click on Download.

Otherwise, you can trim a 10 minute audio down to 1 minute using the free software, Audacity. Source: audacity.sourceforge.net/download/ Unfortunately, due to software patents, Audacity cannot include MP3 encoding software. So, you need to read the instructions for downloading and installing the LAME MP3 encoder. Source: go.osu.edu/LAMEmp3

**STEP 3: Transfer Audio to iPad** - The most reliable way to transfer an MP3 audio file to the iPad is through iTunes sync. This involves adding the new audio file to your iTunes library on a laptop or desktop computer and then syncing the iPad to that computer. In this way, the background music file(s) can be easily selected in SPLICE.

**STEP 4: Download SPLICE App** - Connect to the iPad App Store and download SPLICE - Video Editor

**STEP 5: Create a New Project** - Enter the appropriate name and click Done. You can change the default settings but I like to go with: High Definition, No border, Landscape orientation and Crossfade transition.

**STEP 6: Add Photos** - From the initial screen, you can add Video/Photo(s), a Transition or a text Title. In my case, I will select Video/Photo (Fig 2). This opens your list of albums. After selecting the desired photos, tap Yes to automatically add default transitions between photos.

**HINT:** Arrange photos into albums for ease of access by SPLICE.

**STEP 7: Adjust Photos** - Tap the first photo, editing options will appear (Fig 3). The “+” on the left and right side of the photo allows you to add more photos, video or text. Tap the pencil option, you can select from Pan and Zoom, Special Filters, Duplicating or Deleting (Fig 4). Pan and Zoom is especially nice. Experiment with the start and stop settings. Some people may like to zoom others may like to pan. Just pinch the photo to determine where you will start and where you will stop. Tap the Play button to preview your choice. The Duration button is especially useful for controlling the length of time the photo appears. By default, each image stays on screen for five seconds. Duration can be set to any value between one and ten seconds. Tap Done.

**STEP 8: Switch to Audio** - Tap the top button marked Audio at the top of the edit window (Fig 5). You have three tracks to work with, two for background audio and one for voice recording using the built-in iPad mic. To insert music, tap the “+” button on the first audio track. Select iPod Library and one of your iTunes music files. Alternatively, you can choose Splice Library which provide two free audio tracks plus 18 sound effects.
HINT: Music that you purchase for use on your computer and iPad is not allowed to be attached to a video project and widely distributed. Better to stick with the Royalty-free music from: incompetech.com/music/royalty-free.

STEP 9: Record Voice-Over Narration - After adding background music, you are ready to add a voice narration. Tap the “+” button on the third audio track, marked with a microphone icon (Fig 6). On your first attempt, SPLICE will ask for permission to access the built-in mic. Go ahead and approve that. However, you will need to delete the short audio track you just generated. Tap the orange/brown clip on the microphone track and tap on the trash can icon to delete (Fig 7). Now, you are ready to record.

HINT: Prepare your script and practice it a few times before doing the recording. If you need to trim your audio or expand your photos, do so in advance. SPLICE will stop the audio recorder when it reaches the end of the photos/video timeline, even if you haven’t finished. Also, you may need to lower the volume of the background music track, so as to better hear the voice recording. That can be done without having to redo the voice track. Click on the music track and slide the audio level to lower it. Tap the “X” in the top corner to close this window (Fig 7).

STEP 10: Preview, Adjust and Export - Tap the top button marked Preview at the top of the edit window. Watch and listen to the final video (Fig 8). If necessary, adjust the transitions between photos, re-record the voice track or switch the background audio file. If everything looks and sounds fine, tap Export (Fig 9). SPLICE will begin processing the project and create an HD video. It will be saved in the Camera Roll folder, alongside your other photos taken with the iPad.

STEP 11: Create YouTube Channel and Upload Video - Before uploading to YouTube, you need to create a Google account (Google owns YouTube) and a YouTube business channel. The following two links please see page 21
Captions: (Clockwise From Top Left) Figure 5: Options for adding audio tracks; Figure 6: Background music track is inserted and recording voice-over track; Figure 7: Options for each audio track- trim, fade, volume, delete and play; Figure 8: Edit Screen- Preview option; Figure 9: Following Preview, tap Export to finish processing; Figure 10: Youtube Video with Share link.
provide the necessary instructions:
www.accounts.google.com/signupwithoutgmail
www.support.google.com/youtube/answer/1646861

Once you have created your business channel, you are ready to upload the finished video that was exported to the iPad Camera Roll. Tap the desired video and make sure it plays alright. Tap the Upload icon located in the lower left corner (square shape with an arrow pointing up). You can choose between Message, Mail, iCloud, YouTube, Facebook or Vimeo. However, I've had trouble using this upload approach because the video goes into my personal channel, not my business channel and once that happens you can NOT transfer a video between channels. So, I open the Dropbox app on my iPad and upload the finished video to my account, which I can then access on my laptop or desktop computer. This allows me to connect to YouTube and confirm that I am in the business channel before uploading my video. Additional information from Google regarding uploading videos is at: www.support.google.com/youtube/answer/57924?hl=en

STEP 12: Edit settings in YouTube using video manager - Lastly, from within your business channel on YouTube, you are able to adjust the video title, add a description and select among different security preferences - Public, Unlisted or Private. You can also edit the look of your business channel by uploading a custom header graphic and providing business contact information.

STEP 13: Embed Your Video - Now that all the work is finished, it's time to embed your video into your company website. While there are many different ways to accomplish this, you will need to communicate with your website developer. However, YouTube videos offer a unique id for each video that will form the basis of linking or embedding your video. This YouTube short code is located under the Share this video (Fig 10). I hope you enjoy this brief video about the Dr. Steven M. Still Garden at The Ohio State University. View the final video at: www.youtube.be/sBtzqkEKm5o. ✨