

Notes for teachers

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Introduction

The filmit system is designed to help students create films, reflect on the work, and share both the work and their thoughts about it with other students via the internet. The system uses a digital video camera to capture video, a computer to edit videos and a website on which videos are published, and where students and teachers from participating schools can view videos and add their comments. These notes are intended to help you help your students get the most out of filmit.

Keep it simple

filmit is not about cameras or computers or editing or the internet – it's about communication. Encourage your students to keep it simple and effective. A 20 second video consisting of one shot might be the best way to communicate how big the carrots have grown this week, or how wet and muddy the vegetable garden has got after the rain. A video doesn't have to be a work of art to get its message across. Of course, if students insist on making a short epic with 10 shots, titles, voiceover and music, and seem capable of doing so, you might give them a chance. As long as they know that one simple shot is fine, too.

Keep it brief

Short videos are best, especially when viewed on the internet. Aim to create one video per week of less than 60 seconds. This will mean less time transferring, editing and uploading video files. It also makes for more focused and less (how shall we put

this?) boring videos. And because short videos upload and download more quickly on the website, it makes it more likely that students from other schools will view your videos online and add their comments.

Planning the shoot

Before taking the camera outside, talk to the student camera operators about what's going to happen in the garden and how best they can *filmit*. It is a good idea to agree a shot list in advance – even if there is only one shot on the list. The key is to avoid shooting for shooting's sake – every shot should have a purpose, and that means planning. For more ambitious groups, a storyboard sheet might be appropriate.

Using the camera

Conserve the camera battery – leave the camera charging on its dock until just before you use it. Remind students not to put their fingers over the lens. Discourage students from using the zoom control or moving around too much with the camera- it can lead to shaky footage. Encourage students to shoot close ups as well as long shots - the camera has an excellent close up lens which can be very useful for showing important details.

Voice-over

Audio can be a bit tricky, especially when recorded outside in the presence of several children all of whom are talking simultaneously. Encourage the camera operator to give a real time voice-over commentary on what they are filming, as they film it. The camera operator's mouth will be closest to the built-in microphone, so their voice should be clearly audible above the others. It will also help them clarify what they are filming, and why.

The filmit website

It is important to set aside time with students to look at the Open Futures filmit

website and contribute their comments to the videos.