

ADOPTING DIGITAL FORMATS FOR WRITING SCRIPTS FOR AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTIONS

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Abstract

Writing a script for audio visual content has been often considered the same as writing a script for a play (theatrical play). But over the period of time the formats of writing a script or a screenplay have developed along with the digital technology. These formats have been adopted as a standard in industry of content development. The said paper is an attempt to explain benefits of adopting the digital formats and the importance of writing screenplay or scripts using a professional screenwriting software.

Key words: *Screenplay, Script, Films, TV, Audio-visual content, Celtx, Movie Magic etc.*



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Post pandemic the demand for scripts has been rising at an alarming rate. There have been new formats of audio visual production evolved over the period of time. Where people are consuming a lot of audio-videos content in the form of web series, short reels of Instagram and short other video. All this content which is developed on the internet requires planning which is done by writing a script in a professional manner i.e. using screenplay writing software.

Script is not required for the short formats like memes, reels or short films because most of the time the entire work is done and handled by a single person or at a small level. Ad films are worked out with details by developing storyboards, other details are worked out depending on the budgets of the Ad films. For a layman script is written the way the plays of Shakespeare are written but that's not accepted by the industry. Because the audio-visual industry over the period of time has formalized the way screenplays are written and are accepted. If the screenplay is not according to the format it won't be accepted by any Production House (organizations who are in the business of audiovisual content). Writing the scripts in a format or in other words by using a screenplay writing software benefits both the Writer and Production House. Actually writing the script in digital or in professional formats helps at all three levels of production i.e Pre-production, Production and Post-Production. But for the sake of understanding the benefits, we will associate with the Production House and Writers only.

Benefits of well formatted script for a Production House:

Screenplay becomes very important for films and serials because more people and budgets are involved. Because the money involved is huge everyone needs to have clarity on what exactly is going to happen in the script. Every location and character in the script is important. There are people like Directors, Producers, Art director, Cinematographers, Actors, sound designers, Music Composers etc. who would like to read the script and judge its content to be viable. To develop the audiovisual content a team of professionals is involved. Hence in order to save time and money script becomes an important document. Everyone has different capabilities of reading and understanding. Hence the script writer has to use simple and easy language. Handwritten scripts can not have definite formats. So the industry prefers a typed script which is developed with the help of the software like Final Draft, Celtx and Screenwriters. This software helps enable the script to be molded in the industry accepted formats i.e leaves proper

space between the lines, top-bottom and left-right margins. These spacing in the software are researched and arranged to give one minute equals to one page (1 page= 1 minute) result. In other words if the film script is of 100 pages then the duration of the film is approximately 100 minutes. It becomes easy to work on the script as the script in the digital format becomes easy to be divided according to the schedule of the video-shooting. Similarly the script can be easily divided according to the location, sets, characters, property and scene requirements.

In film, a production manager handles the production budget. They help manage the production workflow and work closely with producers, line-producers and other department heads. There are many tasks production managers and their teams do are staggering. A script written in a proper format becomes handy and helps the entire production team to work efficiently on different aspects of projects. Moreover, the scheduling becomes easy and fast. There is production management software s like Movie Magic, Celtx, Studiobinder etc. which helps in executing scripts at production level.

Benefits to the Writer:

Script writing software provides various options which makes writing faster and easier. Because the formatting and spacing is taken care of by the software, the writer can easily concentrate on the content. Writers can work on any scene without disturbing the flow of the script. The software has separate options for character development. The details of every character can be filled up by the writer, which makes it more real and dynamic. Every scene can be shuffled at any time. There are options to provide additional notes if required. Writers can work in a more structured way with minimum confusion. Writers can easily compare the scenes by various aspects. Keeping the track of property used in various scenes becomes easy. Writers can give special instruction for background music or setting without affecting the main flow of the script.

The copyright registration of the scripts have now become a 100% online process where the writers have to upload the scripts in the digital formats. The Film and TV Writers Association of India (FTWAI) and other writers associations have been promoting the use of professional software for writing.

Contribution of Screenplay software in other media Genre:

Screenplay writing software is also playing a big role in the conceptualization process of video games. The extent to which the creation of successful game narratives might be less about linear plot and more about depth and breadth of story-world and character. In order to better understand the current and future role of the writer and the screenplay within video game conceptualization, we have to examine the crucial relationship between writer and designer and to interrogate the extent to which the process of development is framed and driven by the exigencies of technology.

Virtual Reality (VR) and the new gadgets developed for it provide a completely new experience of consuming fiction. VR scripts happens to be the basics for planning and the script in the proper formats helps to coordinate with all the departments of visual effects and sound effects.

The latest technology like Google Glass and Holo lens are going to change the way fiction is consumed. The screenwriting software are also working towards it but the existing software are contributing their best and are being adopted to create content.

Writing a screenplay in a software helps in a great deal to adapt it to the various genres of media. The Software Celtx also help in development of storyboards which could be adopted for comic books etc. Indeed these software also caters to the traditional media like writing books and novels.

Last but not the least the use of software saves paper and time. The digital scripts could be delivered quickly across the world and the work could be done in collaboration with different stakeholders. Hence it is the need of the time to adopt screenwriting software. One needs to identify yourselves with the changing technology and understand its impact onto the future of screenwriting, at the levels of both conceptualization and documentation.

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