First Light

Top Tips for working with HD

Pre-Production

- What format of HD you shoot is governed by camera manufacturer, budgets and post workflow so choose the most appropriate for your project.

- Make sure you understand the technical workflow from shoot to delivery! It is worth speaking to an editor when making a choice on shooting format so you know how they will use it in post production. Know how you are going to edit the material.

- Shooting on tape or a tapeless system? With the Tapeless formats you need to manage your media effectively and will need to work with a data wrangler. Tape is tried and tested for long-term archiving, reliability and can be imported direct into editing programmes.

- Shoot at 1080 when possible, interlaced for fast moving subjects or progressive for documentary interviews or drama. E.g.1080/25p offers full HD resolution with film like motion. Know your camera settings.

Production

- HD is memory hungry. E.g. Shooting to a 32GB P2 (Panasonic card) will store between 13 minutes and 120 minutes of footage depending on your settings.

- Depending on your camera choice you may have to record sound separately and sync later therefore you will need a sound recordist and a clapper board. For those cameras that capture audio, it may produce usable sound when very close to the subject but will also pick up background noise. It is best practice to use a boom or radio mic connected to camera with XLR leads.

Post-Production

- When importing your HD footage (files) from a digital storage device such as a P2 Card, depending on the editing software you use, you will have to go through a transfer process. You CANNOT simply copy the files across onto your hard drive for editing.

- Depending on format, the main issue is going to be storage, e.g. shooting at ProRes uses 32GB for 15 minutes.

- Rendering time is increased so HD can be more time consuming in post.

Storage & Delivery

- You will need to consider how you will store or archive your work if working in a tapeless format.

- To maintain the quality of HD for playback, you will need to create either a Blueray disc or HD tape. Make sure this additional cost is factored into your budget.