Communicating research through video abstracts

Video abstracts (VAs) are an emerging scholarly genre that offer researchers the opportunity to share their research in plain language and in a brief audiovisual format. But producing them can be costly, time-consuming, and daunting.

What should you know before producing your own VA to share your research?

THE RESEARCH

We conducted a study that looked at people's comprehension and attitudes when they watch research videos featuring PowerPoint slides or animations. Pre- and post-video questionnaires were administered to learn about participants' level of comprehension of the videos and their perceptions of interest, difficulty, and prior knowledge/knowledge gain.
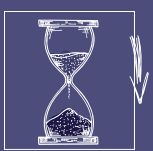
Participants who viewed animated VAs reported feeling more engaged with the content compared to viewers of slideshow VAs.

Participants who reported lower levels of engagement had higher levels of recall (of details, main ideas, and cause-and-effect relationships).

Lower education levels were correlated to higher overall comprehension scores.

Shorter videos were correlated with higher overall comprehension scores.

There was no significant difference in comprehension scores between animated and slideshow VAs.

TIPS FOR VA DESIGN

PLAN

Consider these three guiding questions when you begin preparing your VA:

1) Who is your target audience?
2) What is the goal of the VA?
3) What are your technical capabilities and how much time/money do you want to invest in producing a VA?
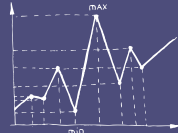
DEVELOP THE SCRIPT

BACKGROUND   METHODS   RESULTS   IMPACT   LINK

The ideal length for VAs is 2-3 minutes long. Most VAs follow the same structure as a research paper and include a brief background to situate the research; an overview of the methods employed by the study; the results; the implications or potential impact of the research; and a link for viewers to read the full paper (written on-screen at the end of the video or in the video description, if uploaded to a site like YouTube).

CREATE

Depending on your budget, there are a lot of low-cost options for producing a VA.

For example, video or voiceovers can be recorded using a cell phone; a variety of free software can be used for editing (e.g., PowerPoint, Canva, iMovie).

READ THE RESEARCH

The effect of research video abstract presentation style on viewer comprehension and engagement

Li, A., O'Brien, H., & Sinnamon, L. (2023). The effect of research video abstract presentation style on viewer comprehension and engagement. Proceedings of the 2023 Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval, 394–400. (Li et al., 2023)

OTHER RESOURCES

Many academic publishers are encouraging researchers to submit VAs with their papers, including:

SAGE Video Abstracts   BMJ Author Hub   Taylor & Francis Author Services