

Making the move

Demand for video is now so widespread that it can't be ignored. Tom Barnes finds G-Technology products can handle all his requirements

The demands of clients are changing constantly, and as Internet speeds make video hosting ever more realistic so the need for moving footage has become more pressing. It's meant that photographers are having to re-assess what they can offer, and more and more have discovered that there is a commercial need to at least dip their toe into the water of filmmaking, and to back up this service there's a requirement to re-examine all aspects of workflow particularly - thanks to the large file sizes that are typically involved - the whole issue of storage.

Celebrated music and portrait photographer Tom Barnes is typical of many who started out shooting exclusively stills, and who have, over the years, come to realise that video also has a role to play in their businesses. With a background in the creative arts to call on and HD-enabled DSLRs that could shoot high quality video footage becoming readily available still photographers have responded well to the challenges of this new medium, but there remains a learning curve that still needs to be negotiated, while the safe and efficient storage of video footage that's been shot for clients has to be a top priority.

"I first started shooting video when I got a Canon EOS 5D MkII when they were first introduced," says Tom. "The novelty was instant and the look was great: until that point it hadn't been possible to shoot HD footage without specialist equipment and I had great fun shooting material for myself alongside my stills. After a while people started to ask me to produce videos for them on tours I was already shooting stills for. It was just a natural transition from there, and most of my video clients have been people I worked for previously. I don't tend to advertise my video work too much since I still want the majority of my energy to be focused on stills, and my calendar is already so busy that I wouldn't have time to take on lots of standalone video projects. I would say that around 10% of my time these

days is spent on video production, and I'm happy to keep it at around that level."

Tom has been a long term user of G-Technology products to store and safeguard his still image files, and there was no reason to look elsewhere for his back-up requirements once he started to produce video files.

"Moving into a video arena did mean an increase in file sizes," he says, "but it wasn't so much of a shock for me since I work regularly with medium format so I'm used to dealing with large amounts of data. I've been using G-Technology products for years so know all about how reliable they are, and they are supported

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by a great warranty. I've always been careful about backups of data and I'm a firm believer that you simply cannot be too safe!

"I've now got a huge amount of data from all the different strands of my work that I need to store, and to cope I've just moved over to one of the new G-Speed Studio systems. This offers 24TB of storage in a RAID5 setup, so I know my data is well looked after and I can happily edit stills and video from the drive as it's plenty fast enough (up to 700MB/sec) thanks to its Thunderbolt 2 interface. I only use the G-Technology drives and I don't worry about my data; I consider that it's in safe hands."

When it comes to backing up files, Tom normally does this in the field at least to give himself one extra copy of the video files. "With stills I back up as I shoot automatically," he says, "but with video you don't have that luxury, so I have a Macbook Air set up that I run a G-Dock



ev into via Thunderbolt. I can then clear cards straight off onto those drives, and working in this way is not only safer but it also saves me time I would otherwise spend backing up files when I get back to the office."

Moving on

These days Tom has moved on from using his DSLRs for video, and is shooting with a range of different cameras, primarily Sony FS700s. He's found these to be very versatile cameras and they also give him the ability to shoot at high frame rates and to work in 4K. "I used DSLRs for a long time and they are great for so many different things, but ultimately they are stills cameras first and video second," says Tom. "The Sony FS700, however, has the feel of a model that's been designed with video in mind from the outset, and it comes with a whole array of specialised features that help to make this side of my business so much easier to manage."

Most of Tom's video production is undertaken in the UK and Europe, and he prefers to keep that side of his business closer to home. At one point when he was touring with bands he was finding himself shooting footage all over the world, but these days it's more commonly restricted to the studio.

"It's nice to shoot my videos on home soil," he says. "As it is they do take longer to bring together because there are more people to organise, processing times for files are longer and there's also an edit to consider."

"I'm used to working much more quickly with stills, while video shoots are undertaken at a slightly slower pace to make sure we get it all done to a standard I'm happy with. One of the main issues I faced initially was getting my head around the different file formats and codecs that were involved, but now it's all becoming second nature as I become more experienced."

In terms of workflow for video, much depends on the client Tom's working for and the project they've commissioned. "Most of the time I prefer not to edit my own videos," he says. "I have a fantastic editor I use when I can, but if a project needs a really quick turnaround then sometimes I will edit it myself. However, I'll always carry out my own grading."

"For me a regular workflow would be shooting the footage and then backing up to G-Drives via G-Dock ev simultaneously. Then I keep one of the drives and deliver the other to my editor along with the brief so that he can cut to it. After I have approved the first edit it's sent on to the client for their feedback, once these changes have been made the G-Drive with the project is sent back to me for the final grade."

"The project is then stored securely for six months, and after that all the raw footage is discarded leaving only the final output."

Changing times call for a changing approach, but the need for safe and secure back up remains consistent. With the quality and reputation of G-Technology behind him Tom can rest assured that his footage - and his reputation - are both fully protected against all the rigours of a sometimes hectic and unforgiving working environment.

More information

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