Best Practices for Video Design

Duplicate effort
Does the module/tutorial/video exist elsewhere? Can you reuse what someone has already done? If so, consider using an existing video rather than creating your own.

Keep it short
Plan on making your video less than three minutes, and no more than four.

Define a learning outcome
Having a concrete learning outcome helps you decide what is important to have in your video, and what you can leave out. For short videos, one learning outcome is almost always enough. If you want to include information that falls outside the scope of your learning outcome, you may need to create more than one video. Your learning outcome can evolve as you work on your script or video, but will anchor you throughout the process.
Learning outcomes usually address a specific skill that students will be able to perform after watching your video and how that skill will benefit them. For our purposes, the more specific the better. Learning outcomes usually follow this format:

After watching this video, students will be able to ___________ in order to ____________.

An example for a video on facets in SearchPlus would be:

After watching this video, students will be able to use appropriate facets in SearchPlus in order to find targeted search results that meet their specific needs.

Make sure that your outcome is concrete and measurable. Avoid words/phrases like “understand” “do better”, etc. Ask yourself: what exactly do you want your viewers to be able to do after watching the video?

Script
Keep it short and simple. Make sure every element you include in your script directly addresses your learning outcome. Steer clear of overly complicated explanations and librarian jargon, like OPAC, discovery layer, LibGuides, etc.

For a short video, your script should be between 200-400 words long.

Make sure script addresses the learning outcome directly, i.e. focuses on teaching the discrete skill you identified. You may need to edit for clarity. If possible, have someone else read your script as well.

Use personal rather than formal style. You can address the viewer directly using “you” or explain your actions using “I’m going to…” (Mayer 2008 766).

Storyboard
Think about what you want to include in your video. Screen shots? Screen recording? Live video? It can be helpful to make notes in the script about what images/video will appear at which point.
**Voice Recording**
Practice beforehand, but remember that you can edit out mistakes later. If you make a mistake, pause, and repeat the same passage again. This takes the pressure off you to complete a perfect take!

If you are using Camtasia, you can take advantage of some basic voice editing/noise removal capabilities, which can be used to reduce ambient noise (which can make your video be more professional). If you want more editing capabilities, you can download Audacity for free.

**Screen Recording**
Plan mouse movements in advance to avoid distracting cursor movements. You may want to practice before you record the screen. Move distinctly and slowly so viewers can follow your movements and keep movements/directions simple. If you make a mistake while recording, pause, and repeat the action. You can always edit later.

**Text and Slides**
If you use slides or annotated screen shots in your video, try to include minimal text – users are distracted when they are asked to both read and listen to a video. (Mayer 2008 764). If you include text, highlight key concepts or vocabulary, rather than full sentences (this is the same principle as good PowerPoint design).

**Final Edits**
Make sure your narration syncs with the material on screen. Edit clips for length and audio for clarity. If you are making a Two Minute Tip video, use intro slide and MSU library branding.

**Accessibility**
For accessibility purposes, videos need to include closed captioning. MSU accessibility requirements specify that all videos should include captions. YouTube automatically provides English captions, which are better than nothing. If you want to take the time, you can add captions in Camtasia or use video captioning software.

**Uploading and Storage**
Upload videos to MSU Mediaspace: msu.mediaspace.edu or YouTube. Keep in mind that Mediaspace does not yet support interactive flash elements such as quizzes. We are happy to work with you to find alternate web hosting options for this kind of content.

Make sure you keep your project files and finished video. Maintaining project files will make it easier to make small edits later, should the need arise, rather than starting from scratch.

**Questions?**
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**Adapted by Emilia from**
Vossler, Joshua. “An Outcomes Based Approach for Developing Effective and Entertaining Instructional Videos.”

See also
Oxford Bibliography on Multimedia Learning