UNIT 12: TV NEWS EDITING

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12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- explain the grammar and functions of editing
- narrate the duties and responsibilities of news desk

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Till now we have discussed about different aspects of TV news. Now, in this unit we will touch upon another important topic, i.e., Editing.

Simply recording the footages does not result in a good news story. The recorded footage needs to be selected and arranged in such a manner that it tells a meaningful story and provides a seamless perception to the audience. This is done through the process of editing. In this unit we will discuss about the importance of editing and how and when it should be done. We will also discuss about the duties and responsibilities of the news desk.

So, let us begin by trying to understand the basic concept of editing.

12.3 CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES OF TV NEWS EDITING

12.3.1 Concept of TV News editing

The concept of editing in television news is a little different from editing news for print media. In print media, editing only refers to editing text and pictures. In television, editing takes place at two stages. One is the news editing, i.e, editing the copy, better known as the script in television terminology. The other one is the technical editing, i.e., packaging. Packing consists of selecting from the footage that has been shot, putting together all the elements of visuals, audio, graphics and music together in the right order to form the complete package, the complete TV news story. The news editor decides the look of the package, the technical editor implements it. Sometimes it is done by the same person. In some news channels there is no separate news editor. The reporter itself is the news editor. After the shooting, the reporter plans an angle for the story and accordingly writes a script and edits the story himself or gets it done with the help of a technical editor.

You must have all watched local and national TV newscasts. Whatever we watch on television is not exactly the shooting order of events of the production crew. The process of television production includes shifting of irrelevant recordings, rearranging and assembling the selected portions which finally results in the running order of sequences. TV news production is not only about putting together some visuals to some audio elements. It is about stringing them in such a manner so as to construct a meaningful story for the viewers in a concise and precise manner.

However editing decisions are based on many considerations, they are:

- A series of disjointed shots are juxtaposed to create meaningful scene and sequences and finally a film
- Delete or omit irrelevant footage
- Either increase or decrease the duration of the programme/film
- Shift the interest of the audience from one aspect of the scene to another

- Conceal or emphasize information
- Reveal information in stages
- Purposely change the significance of the action

You will see all these come to use when you will actually sit down to edit your footage to make a film.

Although we have said that the concept of editing in television and print is a little different, it is however, important to remember the purpose of the editing in both cases is the same. In both the cases, editing is done to give a good shape and form to the content. While newspaper editing is done to accommodate various news stories within the available space in the particular page of a newspaper, TV news editing is carried out to accommodate the various TV news stories within the limited air-time available to it for its telecast. Therefore, while newspaper editing is for space, TV news editing is for time. As a result it is absolutely essential for TV news editors to edit the TV news story in a manner which tells the story to the point and in the most limited time.

Editing TV news requires equipment and some technical expertise, and until now we have focused only on the technical aspects. However, even the most expert technicians may be inept editor unless they know the basic art of editing. You may have the best of rushes on tape, but unless the rushes are well organized into a news story, they remain useless. As students you may shoot the footage and then edit it yourself, but in professional TV news channels, shooting and editing frequently are functions performed by different people. Experienced camerapersons always shoot keeping in mind the editing aspects. We should always keep in mind that there is an intricate relationship between shooting and editing, which has a vital impact on the end product. If there is enough raw footage, a skilled editor can perform miracles. But the job of the editor becomes easier if the video is also shot keeping in mind how the material will finally fit together.

Now for editing, the first step is to determine what footage is available. If the amount of footage is minimal, and the cameraperson is also the editor, a mental note of the shots recorded is adequate. However, if there is extensive footage or the cameraperson is not the editor himself, there is a need for

detailed logging. Good camerapersons often maintain a written record of shots as they shoot, attaching the log-sheet to the tape when it is removed from the recorder. But if the cameraperson does not do it, it is important that the editor does it before he starts editing.

12.3.2 Principles of TV news editing – The Grammar

Technically speaking, an edit means to provide a transition, i.e., a changeover between two shots. Transitions are in the form of cuts, **dissolve, fade (in and out), and wipes**. A number of factors contribute to an edit. How, why and when these elements are used decides how good or bad an edit is. The best edit is usually the inconspicuous edit. This means the audience is not consciously noticing that you, the director or editor, changed the shot. Flashy cuts, transitions that drastically change image size or those that suddenly switch from a static shot to a shot in motion can shift attention away from the intended message.

Good television news editing requires a thorough knowledge of the rules of grammar. These rules are fundamental to a good edit, and it must be followed at all times.

Vasuki Belavadi, in his book, *Video Production*, identifies six elements of the edit - the conditions to be satisfied in order to qualify for a good edit. The six elements are:

i. **Motivation:**
   Why we apply edit gains significance. The reason could be visual or aural. The movement of an actor, the actor's response to a sound, or a combination of visual and aural could be the motivation for an edit.

ii. **Information**
   An edit should be able to reveal new information - in this case visual information. A new shot should be able to add new information otherwise, it would be meaningless to edit.

iii. **Composition**
   A good editor's job is to select and work on the footage available and put them together in such a way that the succeeding shot is not



Cut: It is a direct instantaneous transition from one shot to another. It simply means one picture ends and the next one begins.
Fade in: A transitional device in which, from a black screen, the following shot appears gradually.
Fade Out: A transitional device where the preceeding shot gradually disappears and is replaced by blackness.
Dissolve: It is a transitional device which consists of a simultaneous and overlapping fade out of the first shot and a fade in of the next shot.
Wipe: A transitional device in which one shot is wiped off the screen to reveal another shot underneath.

dramatically different from the previous one or cutting into an ugly shot. Bad **composition** can only make editing more difficult.

iv. Sound

A good editor can heighten tension or create an emotion by using the right kind of sound at the right time. A good sound editing prepares the audience for a change in the scene.

v. Camera Angle

Usually scenes are shot from different camera angles and therefore it is the duty of the editor to maintain a difference of at least 45 degrees between two shots. If the editor fails to do so then it will result in breach of the **180^0 rule.**

vi. Continuity

A good editor should also take into account that each time the camera angle is being changed the presenter or actor should perform the same action so as to maintain the continuity. This of course applies to different 'takes'. However continuity can be of various types:

Continuity of content: Any action between two cuts has to remain the same. For example, if the subject has picked up the receiver with his right hand in an **MCU** (Mid close up), then it is expected that the receiver is still in his right hand in the following **MLS** (Mid Long Shot).

Continuity of movement: The editor should try to maintain continuity of movement. If the actor is moving left to right in the first shot then the actor is expected to maintain the movement in the same direction until a change in the position within the same shot.

Continuity of position: The editor should also maintain continuity in the position of the subject or actor on screen. If in the first shot the subject is in the left corner of the scene then in the next shot also the subject should appear in the left corner of the scene. Unless a change in the movement is seen.

Continuity of sound: The editor should understand that space and time determine the continuity of sound. If the sound of a speeding car is audible in one shot it should continue in the next shot as well. Even if the car is not

Composition:
Composition here refers to shot composition or framing of the shot.

180° rule:
A basic guideline which states that two characters or elements in the same scene should always have the same left/right relationship to each other. If the camera passes over the imaginary axis connecting the two subjects, it is called **crossing the line**.

MCU, MLS: These are different shot sizes. There are seven basic shot sizes. These have been discussed in detail in **unit 16** of this course.

shown in the second shot but the sound of the car should be heard until it is in the hearing distance. Again the scene which shows similar shots of the same time should maintain same sound to show continuity of the events.

When the above mentioned principles of editing are adhered to, one can expect to get a good end product, a programme that is good both aesthetically as well as technically. Just because an editor knows a lot of special effects functions, does not mean that those effects should be used wherever he wants. Every transition – cut, dissolve, fade etc has its own meaning. What is important is to use these functions so as to convey the desired meaning. That is ultimately, the basic function of editing.

Transitions

The editor should understand the concept of transition to maintain the continuity of the sequence. A transition is generally defined as the shot between the shots which ties the story together. If a good transition is not used, the viewer experiences a visual jerk, spoiling the whole experience. Though this is used mainly in making films, it is always beneficial to understand the transition between shots. Dissloves and fades are used, but a good shot to tke the story forward is always visually more rewarding. This is actually the job of the reporter shooting at the location, but today, with multitasking being the order o the day, the reporter could be the editor and understanding transitions and cutaways will always be helpful.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. What is the difference between news editor and technical editor?

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Q. 2. What are the different criteria based on which editing decisions are made?

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Q. 3. While newspaper editing is for space, TV news editing is for.

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Q. 4. Define the following:

a. Cut

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b. Fade in

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c Fade out

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Q. 5 What do you mean by continuity of movement?

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ACTIVITY 12.1

1. Carefully watch a television news bulletin on any news channel of your choice. Make a note of the kind of shots and transition used in editing.

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2. In the same bulletin also look for different types of special effects used.

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12.4 LINEAR AND NON-LINEAR EDITING

The general term for all stages of production occurring after the actual recording and ending with the completed work is known as post production. This process is also known as packaging. These typically include:

- Editing the picture / TV program
- Writing and recording the soundtrack music.
- Editing the soundtrack.
- Adding visual special effects - mainly computer generated imagery (CGI) and digital copy from which release prints will be made (although this may be made obsolete by digital cinema technologies).
- Transfer of film to video.

As we have already discussed earlier, the process of packaging is actually nothing but editing. Editing is the process of re-arranging or modifying segments of video to form another piece of video. The goals of video editing are removal of unwanted footage, the isolation of desired footage, and the arrangement of footage in time to synthesize a new piece of footage.

There are two basic editing systems:

- Non-linear editing system, using computers with video editing software
- Linear video editing, using videotape

1. Linear Editing

Linear editing is basically selecting shots from one tape and copying it onto another tape. It is tape to tape editing. The operational principle of linear editing is *copying.*

All tape-based recording systems are linear, regardless of whether the information recorded on the tape is analog or digital. Linear editing adds visual images and sounds in consecutive order from the beginning to the end of a piece of work. Here we cannot do random editing. We have to edit consecutively from first shot to the last. Once an edit is made, an editor cannot remove a sound or image. There is no concept of 'undo' in linear editing. At best a shot or a sequence can be replaced with another shot or sequence of the same duration.

Linear editing requires careful planning. The editor should be confident about the order or duration of each shot before he or she edits it into the project because it a hassle to remove it or replace it later.

Disk based editing system: Editing system in which video and audio data are first captured to hard disks or other digital storage devices.

2. Non Linear Editing

Non-linear editing is computer based editing system in which scenes can be arranged and played in any order. It is also called random or virtual editing. Here the shots captured on tape are captured from the tape onto the computer's hard disk. This process is called digitizing. Once digitized, every shot becomes what we call a clip or clipping. Non-linear editing allows us to select and rearrange these frames and shots or clips. Rather than copy certain images as in linear editing, you sort through the image files and mark them to play back in a specific order.



Motion Graphics Programme: Graphics programme that use video or animation technology to create the illusion of motion or a transforming appearance.

All editing systems that are **disk-based** are non-linear. Some of the most popular non-linear editing softwares are **Avid Media Composer**, **Avid Xpress Pro**, **Apple's Final Cut Pro**, and **Adobe's Premiere** among others. High definition video is becoming more popular and can be readily edited using the same software along with related **motion graphics programs**. Clips are arranged on a timeline, music tracks and titles are added, effects can be created, and the finished program is "rendered" into a finished video. The video may then be distributed in a variety of ways including DVD, iPod, CD-ROM, or videotape etc .

For editing home videos, consumer-friendly editing softwares such as **Adobe Premiere Elements**, **AVID Express DV**, **CyberLink PowerDirector**, **Final Cut Express**, **Sony Vegas**, **Pinnacle Studio**, **ULead VideoStudio**, **Roxio Easy Media Creator**, **Magix Movie Edit Pro** and **Muvee AutoProducer** have come on the market with the emergence of computer video editing for the home PC. Two free programs that are bundled with computers are **Apple's IMovie** and **Microsoft's Windows Movie Maker**.

Linear vs Non Linear Editing

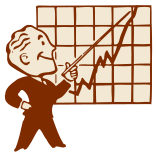
In the early days of electronic video production, linear (tape-to-tape) editing was the only way to edit video tapes. Then, in the 1990s, non-linear editing computers became available and opened a whole new world of editing power and flexibility.

Non-linear editing was not welcomed by everyone and many editors resisted the new wave. In addition, early digital video was plagued with performance issues and uncertainty. However, the advantages of non-linear video eventually became so overwhelming that they could not be ignored.

In the 21st Century non-linear editing is the king and linear editing is widely considered to be obsolete, or at least primitive. This is an understandable attitude considering the advantages of non-linear editing, but we urge you not to be too judgemental. Linear editing still has some advantages:

1. It is simple and inexpensive. There are very few complications with formats, hardware conflicts, etc.
2. For some jobs linear editing is better. For example, if all you want to do is add two sections of video together, it is a lot quicker and easier to edit tape-to-tape than to capture and edit on a hard drive.
3. Learning linear editing skills increases your knowledge base and versatility. According to many professional editors, those who learn linear editing first tend to become better all-round editors.

While computer based non-linear editing has been adopted throughout most of the commercial, film, industrial and consumer video industries, linear video tape editing is still commonplace in many television station newsrooms, and medium-sized production facilities which haven't made the capital investment in newer technologies. News departments often still use linear editing because they can start editing tape and feeds from the field as soon as received since no additional time is spent capturing material as is necessary in non-linear editing systems.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS B

Q. 6. What are the goals of video editing?

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Q.7. Name the two basic types of video editing?

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Q.8. What do you mean by linear editing? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

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Q.9. What is non-linear editing? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

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Q.10. Linear editing is also known as.

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ACTIVITY 12.2

1. Visit a local television station and learn how linear and non-linear editing take place.
2. Make a television interview programme of 10 minutes with any personality of your choice.

12.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been introduced to the basic concepts of television news editing and presentation. Let us quickly recapitulate these concepts once.

- Editing is one of the most important activities of the post-production phase.
- The goals of video editing are removal of unwanted footage, the isolation of desired footage, and the arrangement of footage in time to synthesize a new piece of footage.
- The news editor decides the look of the package, the technical editor implements it.
- There are two basic types of editing. They are:
  a) Linear editing
  b) Non-linear editing
- Linear editing is a system of tape to tape to editing which is done by selecting shots from one tape and copying it onto another tape.
- Non-linear editing is computer based editing system in which scenes can be arranged and played in any order. It is also called random or virtual editing. Here the shots captured on tape are captured from the tape onto the computer's hard disk. Then the shots and sequences are arranged in order according to necessity and convenience.



12.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. No. 1 :

The difference between news editor and technical editor is that while he news editor decides the look of the package, the technical editor implements it.

Ans to Q. No. 2 : The different criteria based on which editing decisions are made are:

a. A series of disjointed shots are juxtaposed to create meaningful scene and sequences and finally a film

b. Delete or omit irrelevant footage

c. Either increase or decrease the duration of the programme/ film

d. Shift the interest of the audience from one aspect of the scene to another

e. Conceal or emphasize information

f. Reveal information in stages

g. Purposely change the significance of the action

Ans to Q. No. 3 : Time

Ans to Q. No. 4: a) Cut: It is a direct instantaneous transition from one shot to another. It simply means one picture ends and the next one begins.

b) Fade in: A transitional device in which, from a black screen, the following shot appears gradually.

c) Fade Out: A transitional device where the preceeding shot gradually disappears and is replaced by blackness.

Ans to Q. No. 5 : Continuity of movement: The editor should try to maintain continuity of movement. If the actor is moving left to right in the first shot then the actor is expected to maintain the movement in the same direction until a change in the position within the same shot.

Ans to Q. No. 6: The goals of video editing are removal of unwanted footage, the isolation of desired footage, and the arrangement of footage in time to synthesize a new piece of footage.

Ans to Q. No. 7 : The two basic types of editing are:

c) Linear editing

d) Non-linear editing

Ans to Q. No. 8 : Linear editing is a system of tape to tape to editing which is done by selecting shots from one tape and copying it onto another tape. There are several advantages of linear editing. They are:

a) It is simple and inexpensive.

b) For simple cut-to-cut editing tasks it is a lot quicker and easier to edit tape-to-tape than to capture and edit on a hard drive.

c) Learning linear editing skills increases your knowledge base and versatility.

The disadvantages of linear editing are:

a) Here we cannot do random editing. We have to edit consecutively from first shot to the last.

b) Once an edit is made, an editor cannot remove a sound or image. There is no concept of 'undo' in linear editing.

4) Non-linear editing is computer based editing system in which scenes can be arranged and played in any order. It is also called random or virtual editing. Here the shots captured on tape are captured from the tape onto the computer's hard disk. Then the shots and sequences are arranged in order according to necessity and convenience.

The advantages of non-linear editing are:

a) Non-linear editing allows us to select and rearrange frames and shots or clips in random order.

b) Shots can be changed or removed even from the middle at any time without any hassle.

c) It beautifully supports the use of special effects, particularly useful for large projects.

The disadvantages of non-linear editing are:

a) The process of capturing is very time consuming.

b) It can be very expensive at times.

5) Random editing



12.7 FURTHER READING

1. Belavadi, Vasuki (2007) Video Production, Oxford University Press.

2. Donald, Ralph, Maynard, Riley, Spann, Thomas (2008) Fundamentals of Television Production. Pearson/Allyn and Bacom.

3. Kaushik, Sharda (2003) Script to Screen : An Introduction to TV Journalism. New Delhi : Macmillan India Limited.

4. Thompson, Ray, Bowen, Christopher (2009) Grammar of the Edit. UK : Focal Press.

12.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Q. 1. What are the basic principles of television news editing?

Q. 2. What is the difference between linear editing and non-linear editing?

Q. 3. What is the importance of continuity in editing? What are the different types of editing?

Q. 4. Explain the significance of editing.