



Wodonga / Albury Camera Club Audio/Visual Competition June 2024

WACC Contact

David Willis

davidtwillis@bigpond.com

Judge:

Bob Thomas

Subject:

Audio / Visual

Audio / Visual Competition

General Comments: The AVs in this competition are mostly of a very similar standard with a couple of superior productions. There are several comments I might add which might assist your members in the future and those are included in their respective comments below. The main “take away” issues can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Remember that this is an Audio-Visual Competition, not a slide show, so emphasis must be given to all the elements which include sound, imagery and production. If you haven't addressed each of these aspects then it's not an AV, it's a slide show.
- 2) Ideally, a good AV tells a story using the above three elements. It should inspire and inform your audience and engage their attention. It should be polished, professional and leave your audience wanting more, or at least feeling glad they have seen your work.
- 3) These days it is relatively inexpensive to purchase a PC microphone, and audio software is free. A more professional AV today uses narration rather than asking your audience to read text on the screen. Voice-overs lift almost any AV to the next level.
- 4) Consider television ads on the TV as an example. As with short Avs, they only have a brief few moments to engage their audience, and yet somehow they manage it. An AV producer faces a similar challenge, and your aim is to capture your audience's attention and keep it within that very tight timeframe. This means careful selection of images and keeping only the best rather than trying to show all of them. Quality beats quantity every time.

All of the above might seem like a lot to ask, but if you at least aim to meet those elements then you're well on the way to success.

	Points (40)	Place
01. Alma's Garden_43		
An interesting look at a reasonably unknown location, illustrating the fact that there are stories around every corner. The visuals are well handled and the inclusion of a couple of people helps to humanise the story. The voice-over is clear and fits with the narrative, however there is no mention of the narrator's name in the credits. Always essential to give credit to all those involved. The credits at the end run past too quickly to read, presumably to keep within the 3.21 time limit. It would be better to leave one of the images out, thus ending in a more relaxed way rather than in a rush.	34	
02. Amazon Jungle_07		
This video has the potential to be a really good AV and should be up there with the winners. Unfortunately, it is let down by two things. Firstly, the image resolution in most cases was far too low, so that there is none of the crispness and clarity we expect from a competition AV. The actual composition is great, and the range of interesting creatures and plants would be mesmerising if only that resolution had been higher. Secondly, there is no attempt at introducing any production techniques such as fades, movement, transitions or other processing techniques which are an essential requirement, particularly with such a fascinating range of images. It is essentially a slide show rather than a story, and there is a wonderful story here just waiting to be told.	25	
03. South American Vacation_37		
An interesting location and a range of images for your audience to take in. The use of a voiceover is always a good idea and much better than relying on captions. The picture-in-picture idea was initially a good idea but was perhaps over-used here. There are many, many transitions and techniques available to convey a sense of movement. The secret lies in finding a balance between judicious use and over-use, and in this case, it would have been better to have used other techniques as well. The smaller image overlaying the larger ones deprived your audience of a closer look at the buildings and architecture, effectively reducing the value of the individual frames. Overall, a good look at the location and an insight into a world many of us will not experience.	32	
04. From Inca Empire to modern day_81		
A location that many of us would like to see, but for those who cannot do so these video productions provide a window into that ancient world. The AV uses well known and appropriate music, and the use of movement brings the AV to life. You do need to be wary of overdoing the transitions as they can change from interesting to annoying if used to excess. The captions explained the back story well, but I would strongly recommend to all AV makers that they look to narration instead of captions. We all read at different rates, but we listen at the same pace. If your own voice is better suited to mime, then there are now AI	33	

<p>options which will instantly produce a professional voiceover from a script that you write. This is an interesting AV but you have made the classic mistake of trying to show us too much in too little time. Better to leave out a few images, thus giving your audience more time to appreciate the rest.</p>		
<p>05. Judy's Garden_43</p>		
<p>I have to confess that the appeal of flowers to me is roughly the same as the prospect of brain surgery without an anaesthetic. Fortunately, I am not here to impose my own preferences on an unsuspecting camera club audience, and so I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of this AV which ticks a lot of flower boxes. The images are excellent and the transitions are effective without being in your face. The gentle movement lifts the viewing experience in a way that suits the softness of the subject. My only small criticism is the slightly rushed credits at the end, which is not uncommon in many AVs. Generally, it is better to drop one of the images and use that time to permit a more leisurely exit from the production.</p>	<p>38</p>	<p>1st Place</p>
<p>06. The Moon_189</p>		
<p>An unusual subject and one which is both familiar to us and unfamiliar at the same time. The images are not as crisp as others, but given the challenges of night-time photography that is to be expected. The choice of music is good and the sub-titles are easily read. As mentioned elsewhere, it might be time to look at narration as a viable and more professional alternative. There is far more information that you can pass on to your audience if all they have to do is listen rather than read.</p>	<p>34</p>	
<p>07. Costa Rica 2023_01</p>		
<p>This AV contains not one but many spectacular images which are engaging, colourful and impressive. The photography is excellent and there is a lot to take in as we journey through images of so many beautiful and exotic birds. However, there are two fundamental problems in this AV which are not uncommon in AV world. The first is trying to show the audience too much in too little time. We all know what it's like to come home with our memory cards bursting with amazing sights, but the reality is that 3 minutes and 21 simply isn't long enough to show them everything. Far better to let us pause and zoom in on a select few rather than having our eyeballs and brains pushed beyond their limits. The second, related issue is our ability to read the text and captions. The average human reads at 238 words per minute, or 3.96 words per second. Some of your text was on the screen for only 6 seconds which means that the most we can be expected to read would be 24 words. Your 6 second slide however ran to 107 words – way beyond anyone's reading capacity!! Not only that, the slide included maps and foreign words. This is a classic example of where a narration would have been much more successful.</p>	<p>37</p>	<p>2nd Place</p>
<p>08. Norfolk Island_119</p>		
<p>A good profile of Norfolk Island with catchy music and an interesting story. At the risk of getting boring, I would once again suggest a narration to make the AV more professional. Captions are a little bit last century but old habits die hard. Leaving that aside, another way of elevating your competition AVs is to introduce a few more (not too many) movement transitions which would give a little life to otherwise static shots. Take care with the ending so as to avoid any abrupt ending. Very nice photography overall and a great look at an interesting place.</p>	<p>36</p>	<p>3rd Place</p>

10. From the mountains to the sea_81		
<p>Some interesting images here, some of which are almost abstracts which gives them a whole new level of interest. The sound track is good and you have clearly put some effort into making that track which is always a positive when making Avs. It could perhaps do with some sort of story to tie all the images together. The viewer is left wondering where the images were taken, so maybe a few captions here and there might lift it a little. It would also help if rather than using a whole lot of transitions, you applied them a little more sparingly, and used some zooming and panning to give the scenes a sense of movement. Transitions are a useful way of linking images, but one can get a little over enthusiastic given the huge variety at our fingertips. Sometimes a very basic fade can provide welcome relief from constant page turns and other effects.</p>	33	
11. Iguazu Falls_37		
<p>This one brings back memories, as I produced a very successful AV after my own visit to the falls some 14 years ago. My AV is perhaps a little dated now, but it might illustrate some of the ways in which you might lift your own AV. You will agree that it is an experience like no other and is well worth sharing with others. I would suggest that including some of the facts and figures would be enlightening and would help your audience relate to the sheer size and magnitude of the falls. A voiceover would achieve this and let you fill in the history and location. Perhaps include a map identifying where the falls are located. I know that some of those who saw my AV ended up going there as well, so hopefully your AV will encourage others to do the same.</p>	35	HC
12. Black Dragon Garden_43		
<p>A really nice representation of the gardens, with good images and a comprehensive look at the various nooks and crannies within the gardens. The various transitions are well utilised, and have been used sparingly so that the audience doesn't find them overpowering. The primary problem here is that the audience hasn't a clue what they are looking at until the very end. It's essential that your audience knows where you have taken them and why. The "where" isn't revealed until the closing credits, and the backstory remains a mystery. Again, those credits zoom past our eyes too quickly to easily absorb. A good AV informs and entertains its audience and this means conveying as much information as possible right from the very start. If we are fast readers we eventually find out where the images were taken, but we still have no idea what the gardens were created for. This is where a voice-over would lift this AV tremendously and describe and explain what we are seeing.</p>	35	HC