

# a digital direction

DIGITAL IS A simple enough word, but the application of digital into events, marketing and communications can seem confusing, as we all interpret the terminology differently depending on our experiences.



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**D**igital is a technology, a style, a platform, a channel through which we communicate our message to an audience. Many of us are comfortable with traditional live events or mainstream media channels however digital is quickly becoming an expected element or alternative to that. When deciding how you are going to communicate your message, you must firstly have some clear guidelines in your head:

## 1. What are you trying to communicate?

Be really clear about what your message is and always come back to this throughout the whole process.

Digital content covers a broad range of areas that you may be required to produce within your role. It may be conference graphics,

opening or closing videos, presentations, signage or microsites. Webinars are also increasing in popularity as a means for people to engage with their audience as they offer a lower cost alternative to a conference and also allow the stakeholder to engage with a broader audience over a longer period of time.

Custom made content where a message is required to be explained through a graphically animated story rather than a traditional talking head is becoming a more common highly engaging way to tell a story. Creating graphics which support key messages also allows the audience member to both visually and audibly engage with that message and retain information.

Creating content can be daunting and intimidating, but a digital environment creates multiple exciting possibilities that aren't always achievable in a live scenario. Digital content can be either a stand-alone communication, or be created to support a series of channels to communicate your message.

## 2. How will the content be viewed?

# Have you read your venue contract lately?

Many venue contracts impose a responsibility upon their hirers which goes beyond the extent to which you can normally insure.

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Content can be played across multiple different channels, but this does need to be factored in at the start to achieve the best outcome. This is really key to ensuring that the final product is the best it can be. Having a clear understanding of final medium determines the equipment, time and budget needed. It is preferable to produce content at the highest quality the budget allows as it is much easier to reduce the size of a final digital product than increase without losing quality. Digital dimensions are constantly changing with new digital mediums from tablets to projections, so be sure to discuss these technical aspects at the briefing stage. A professional digital media team should always give the best advice on this.

**3. How much time do you have to spend?**

This is sometimes more important than how much it will cost or your budget! Planning to create content is not only the pre-production time that the content producers have but also how much time you have to invest. Like any project there is a requirement for your time to be invested to review content and also sign off various phases. Making time to view content at various stages of development from idea generation through to storyboarding and onto the final production can save a lot of wasted time. Visual work is always an interpretation and it is only when it comes to life it can be assessed on whether it hits the mark. Making time to sit with a designer, editor, animator during the process helps guide the focus of what is being created and fine tune the end result.

Reviewing content is easier with the advent of ftp sites, dropbox or

secure web channels which take a lot of pressure off having to come into the studio to view content. G1 prefers to have clients in our offices for viewing content, particularly for large format or complex projects that require lots of computer power and quick on-the-spot changes. For us to create content in a way that clients can view in their office on their system takes up valuable time to render and export. It also allows our client to view the content in creation and in many instances more quickly make changes that can be viewed. Knowing how much time is available to create the content is imperative. Some processes take a considerably longer period of time than others and this factor completely shapes what is possible creatively.

**4. How much will it cost?**

If you have budget guidelines this really helps to determine what can be achieved! Often the first question we are asked by a client is 'how much will it cost to produce X?' Without the parameters outlined above being clearly set this is often like asking how long is a piece of string. If you have a budget, or some budget guidelines, this really helps to determine what can be achieved, so that realistic expectations are set at the beginning of a project. Sometimes it is time which is the limiting factor and not the budget, and some great creative work can be developed on a modest budget, but it is about setting realistic expectations up front to ensure that no time is wasted.

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