

TerreWeb – Film Workshop

Feedback Report

September 14-16, 2012

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Original Mix Proposal

APPROVED: \$500

Project: Equipment funds for a digital video camera for a multi-disciplinary science communication and outreach film-production workshop

Mix partners' names, departments, faculties, and contact information

Main Contact:

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Project Director and Liaison Officer

TerreWEB (Terrestrial Research on Ecosystems & World-wide Education & Broadcast)

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UBC Mix Partners:

- Dr. Suzanne Simard, Forest Sciences, Faculty of Forestry
- Dr. Candis Callison, School of Journalism, Faculty of Arts
- Dr. Andy Black, Faculty of Land and Food Systems
- Dr. Andreas Christen, Department of Geography
- Dr. Mark S. Johnson, Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability and Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences
- Dr. Simon Donner Department of Geography
- Mark Zuberbuhler, Executive Producer, Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology
- Cyprien Lomas, Director, LFS Learning Centre

Plans for Mix activity, Mix funds, and student participant evaluation Activity: We propose to organize an introduction to film-making for students and supervisors from various backgrounds for May 2012, in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology. This 5-day immersion workshop will teach participants - supervisors (at least three of the above faculty members) and 10 of their graduate students - to communicate scientific findings by creating compelling, professional-quality films. Topics will include story selection, writing, interviewing skills, camera technique, voice-overs, film and audio production, basic film and audio editing, project output and distribution. These technical elements will underpin the main focus of the workshop: effective communication of science by storytelling through film.

Student participant evaluation: A "hands-on" approach will be emphasized, and participants will put concepts introduced in lecture into daily practice. Participants will also critique existing documentaries, and by the end of the workshop, will split up into groups of 4 to produce a short film on a research topic to be decided within the groups. Journalists and scientists, students and faculty, will work hand in hand in order to create a compelling story as well as scientifically-sound content. Films will be evaluated after completion within the group and shared with UBC Mix.

Mix funds: Teaching locations will be sponsored by the CTLT and lecturers will volunteer; however, we would like to purchase a digital camera to allow for a satisfactory film-making experience and visually appealing quality of production. Thus, the \$500 from UBC Mix would go entirely towards the purchase of a digital camera. After completion of the workshop, the camera will be used to film future student workshops and projects in the science communication program TerreWEB. These recordings will be available for students on the TerreWEB website.

Mix Description

Date

September 14-16, 2012

Description

(From TerreWeb webpage: <http://terreweb.ubc.ca/2012/05/18/video-production-workshop-with-dr-randy-olson/>)



This 3-day, intensive video production workshop takes students who have had absolutely no experience with filming or editing all the way from initial concept to the finished video product. This workshop is a great opportunity for students to develop their communication skills through creative outlets such as video. For many students, it literally ends up being a “life altering experience,” as they go on to get further involved with video production.

The general workshop outline is as follows:

- **DAY ONE: THE PITCH AND PLANNING** Each student comes up with a concept for his/her video and then “pitches” it to the rest of the group in 3 minutes. The pitches are voted upon and the top five ideas are selected for production. The winning student becomes the “Director” and a group of peers make up the production team.
- **DAY TWO: PRODUCTION AND EDITING** The students set to work with filming and editing their videos.
- **DAY THREE: FINAL EDITING AND THE “FILM FESTIVAL”**

A complete draft of the video will be ready in the morning for final polishing. By the late afternoon the videos are submitted and presented in a “film festival” style event. Students will have the opportunity to introduce, show and describe the process of making the video to their peers.

For more information about Randy Olson and details about the workshop, please visit <http://thebenshi.com/?p=1069>

Dates: Friday Sept. 14 – Sunday Sept. 16 (All day)

Location: UBC Campus

Cost:

- \$100 for TerreWEB, BRITE and WoW students and faculty

- \$200 for other students and faculty

Maximum 25 spots.

To inquire and/or register for the workshop, please email Julie Wilson (juwilson@interchange.ubc.ca).
Priority registration for TerreWEB, BRITE and WoW members.

Link to Videos

See the films here: <http://terreweb.ubc.ca/terreweb-videos/>

Post-Workshop Publicity

In October 2012, Julia Dordel sent the following email:

We have finally also held our UBC-Mix co-sponsored film workshop. I have attached the feedback forms. The Workshop was a great success - one of the student films produced during the workshop was even featured in the NYTimes. I had sent around this announcement yesterday - also to UBC Media but you may not have gotten it (please see below this email).

Aside from that the video has been featured: USA Today College
<http://www.usatodayeducate.com/staging/index.php/campuslife/the-importance-of-spreading-science>

Randy Olson's blog, The Benshi (he has lead the workshop) <http://thebenshi.com/2012/09/23/232-the-vidiomaking-workshop-11th-time-produces-domino-effect/>

The TYEE <http://thetyee.ca/Video/2012/09/26/UBC-Student-Video-On-New-York-Times/>

What else can one wish for!?

:-) Best Julia

UBC's TerreWEB scholars' video featured in the New York Times today:

Even scientists have powerful untapped creative talent. So much so that you can see one creative work of UBC Science Communication today in the New York Times at:

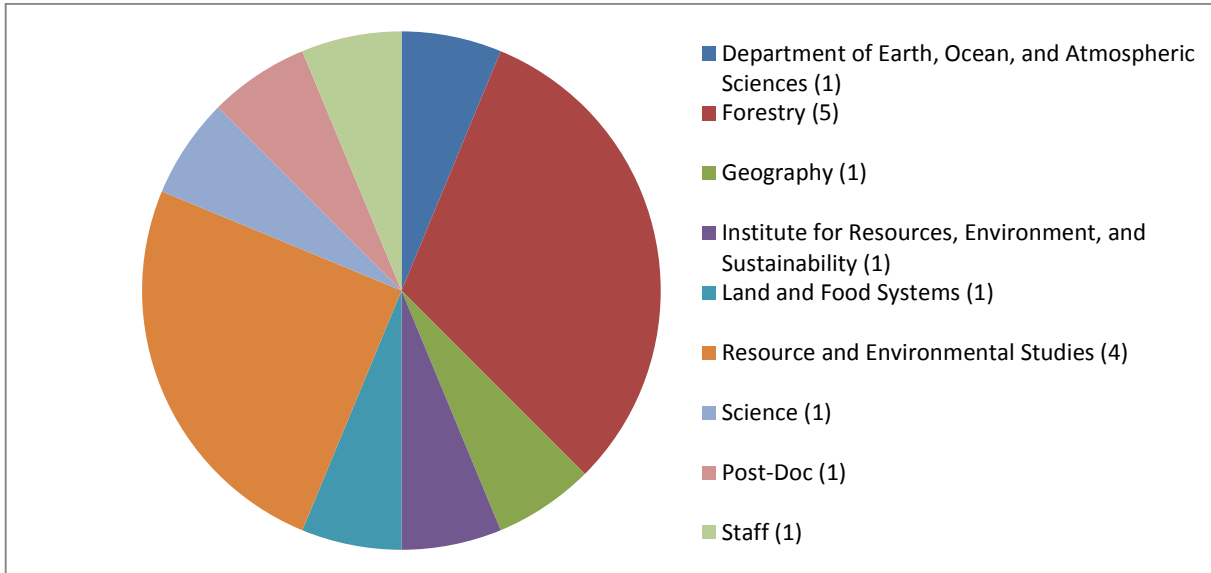
<http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/09/26/the-domino-effect-in-nature-and-visual-storytelling/>

Making communication of science simple yet visually appealing was the task of an intense three-day film workshop lead by scientist turned LA filmmaker [Randy Olson](#). Science graduate students with no background in filmmaking had three days to debunk a science myth and set the record straight - using film as a medium. The workshop was organized by the UBC based NSERC CREATE science communication training program TerreWEB (lead by Professor Suzanne Simard) and co-hosted by CREATE programs [BRITE](#) and [WOW](#), as well as [UBC Mix](#).

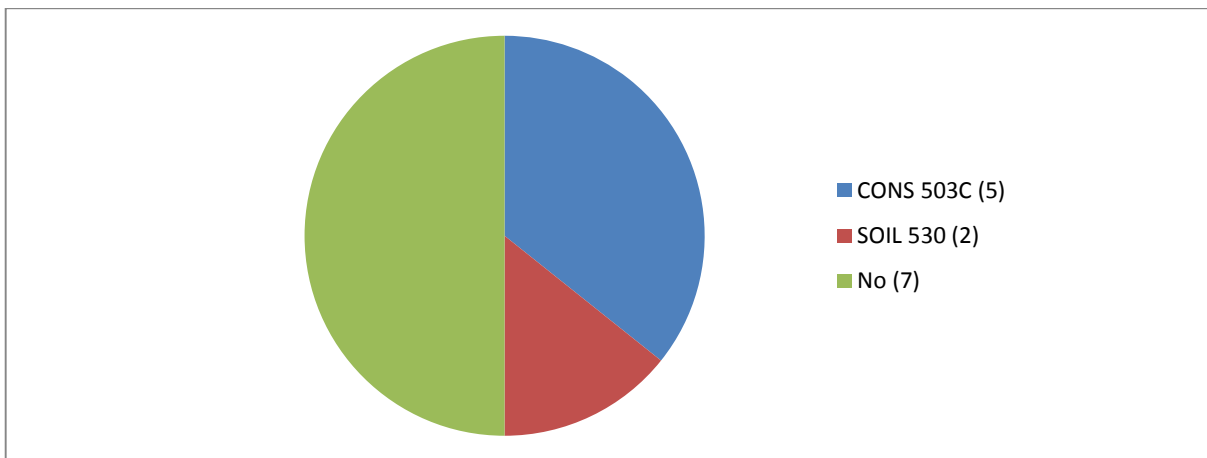
All student films can be seen [here](#) on the TerreWEB website.

Mix Feedback: Respondent Profile (17 respondents)

What is your level of study or position at the university?



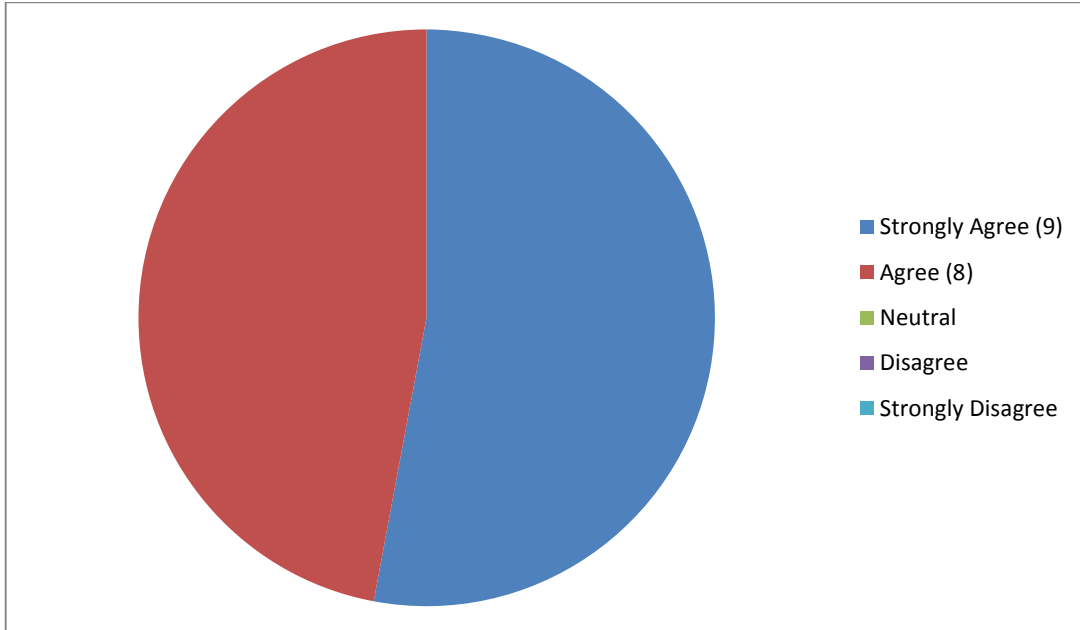
Are you registered in a course (or courses) related to this event? If yes, what is the course name and number?



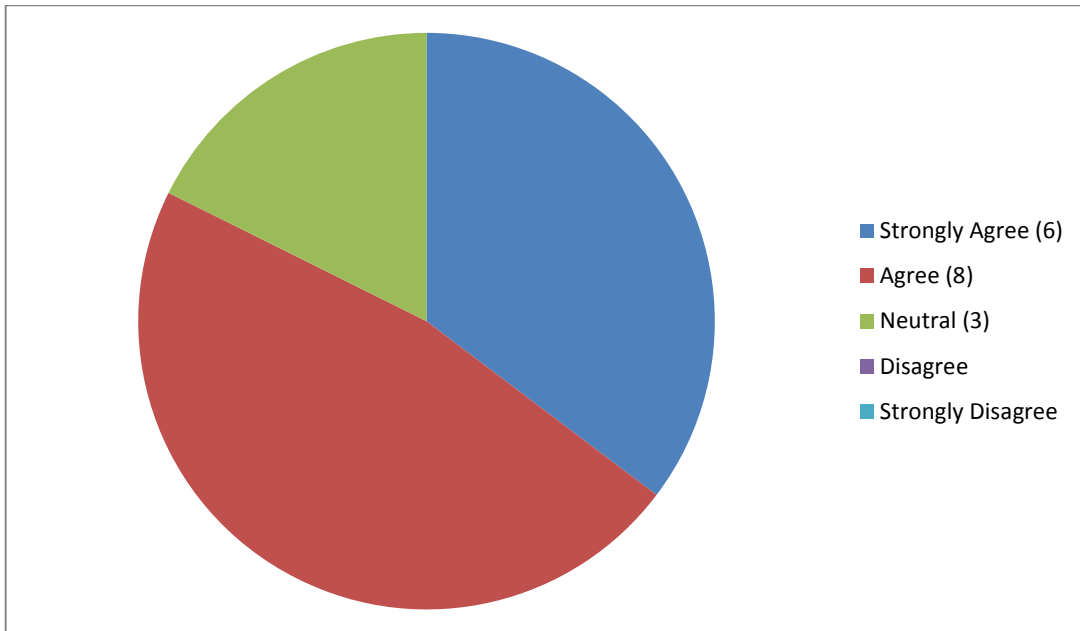
Interdisciplinary values

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements.

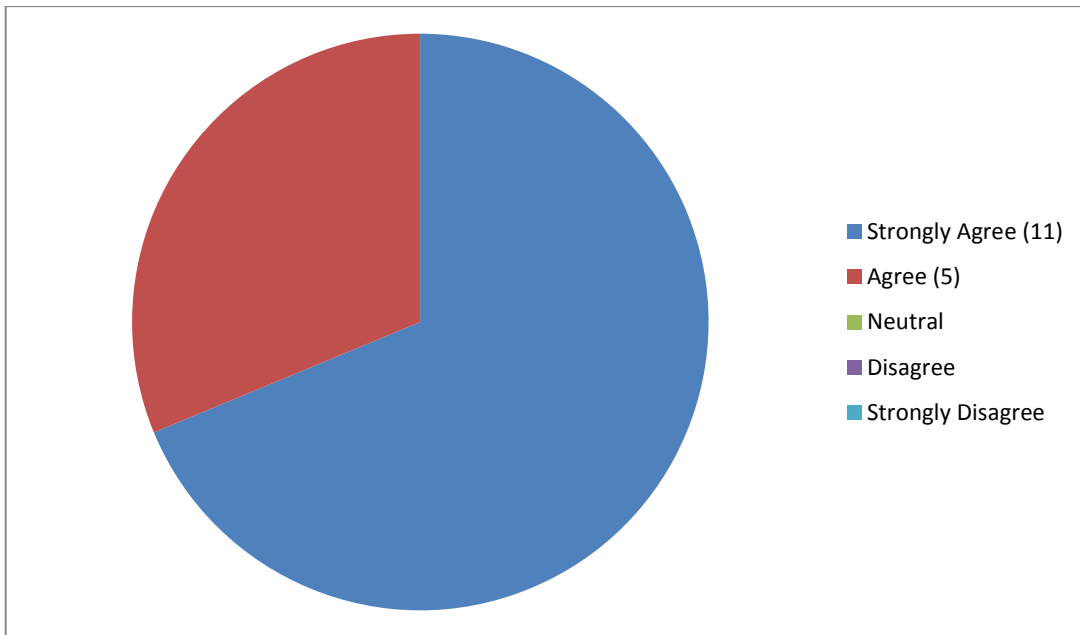
This event was educationally valuable to me.



The interdisciplinary nature of this event enhanced my learning.



In general, connecting with students and instructors in other disciplines enriches my education.



Qualitative Responses

Suggestions to improve this event:

- I would have liked to receive more editing skills and coaching in this department. Perhaps a handout on the basics would have been a nice touch. Luckily there was someone talented in my group who could assist with this.
- Given that there wasn't necessarily a specific filmmaking event coming up, and therefore the workshop could have been scheduled at any time, doing it in the first two weeks of a new semester was a bit hectic. Many students have just moved into new apartments, are adjusting to Vancouver, new classes, etc., to have three full days over a weekend when a lot of early semester organization takes place was a lot. If it could be pushed to October or another time in the future might be helpful. / It would have been helpful if people with either filming or editing experience were evenly divided between the groups, as some groups had several and others with none at all. /It was great (and critical in the end) on the technical side of things to have Dan there, and maybe I just missed it, but on Sat and Sun really didn't see much of Randy! He checked in to see what we were doing occasionally, but after Friday didn't offer much guidance in terms of how/where things were going. I imagine we would have benefitted from more of his insight throughout the process.
- It would have been nice to have it spread out a bit more as it was a pretty intense time with all the work in the workshop and then additional work outside of the workshop, but I know that was mostly out of necessity, so I am not sure to what level this could be improved.
- Was overall quite awesome!
- Would be great if the instructors of the FinalCutProX would be more consistent with their teaching and more patient. Perhaps if there were more FinalCutProX facilitators it would have avoided them from rushing you through this programme...
- Since many of us were adept at editing the films and had a number of good scripts on the first day I would have appreciated more time spent on making a quality film. How to get set up a good camera shot, how to get the idea of moving from one place to another in a couple of shots set up to depict that motion,... etc.
- Randy was an excellent motivator and Dan was very knowledgeable technically. There was a lot to learn, particularly for people that were new to filmmaking and editing software. I think that students would have received even more skills from the workshop if there was a little more time for editing. (Although Randy's lectures were extremely valuable, so I wouldn't cut any time from him!) In our group, none of the students were familiar with Final cut pro, and had never done anything like this before. As a result, we were doing very basic editing. Randy and Dan were excellent resources, however, they were more of "doers" than teachers. Throughout the editing, they would evaluate our progress, and find ways to improve our film, but basically do the work instead of allowing us to learn how to do it. I know it's very difficult to fit everything into a few days and schedules do not often permit for such long workshops. but, perhaps one more day would allow for the beginners to learn more of the editing process. Overall, though, it was a great success, and Randy is an amazing speaker. Thanks for organizing!
- It would have been very difficult to complete the videos without having a group member who knew Final Cut Pro. What I missed in the workshop was any kind of tutorial to the editing program. Perhaps this should be a piece that is done separately prior to the workshop because not everybody would need that "training".
- It could be useful to explain how to use the technical equipment (cameras, microphones) a bit more. That might make the filming a little easier and could avoid having to reshoot takes.
- More instruction on how to use FinalCutPro would have been useful. Luckily some people had previous experience, but if those 5 out of 21 people hadn't been there, the videos would have

been very basic. It would have been too big a challenge for those without any video editing knowledge to complete in 2 days without any training.

- The things that made this workshop successful were the focus on team work, the structure of Day 1 in which we pitched, voted on, then refined the video concepts. Most importantly, the strong background and emphasis on storytelling concepts and techniques from Randy Olson. / The main thing I would improve with this is related to learning the editing skills, which is really the tangible skill learned in this course. I would have liked to have maybe a one or two hour introduction to FinalCutPro, and I would have liked to have shared the editing duties a bit more. / A great workshop. Thanks so much for organizing it!!
- I would have much more formal instruction on FCP on the first day. Also, just better organized instruction in general. I often felt a little lost, and the instructors weren't always available to help, although they tried really hard!
- I enjoyed the idea of the workshop; my main concern was that the timing was not the best. Typically you would think that the beginning of the term is always convenient, but with a variety of scholarship deadlines also around that time taking three full days adds a bit of un-needed stress. / I also wanted to add that much thanks goes to Julie for bringing in coffee every morning. It was truly a life saver!
- More time learning software and giving everyone a chance to try out all aspects of the process
- Maybe try to schedule during a rainy Nov. weekend... ;)